



THE LIBERTY "76" BOYS OF '76

A Weekly Magazine containing Stories of the American Revolution.

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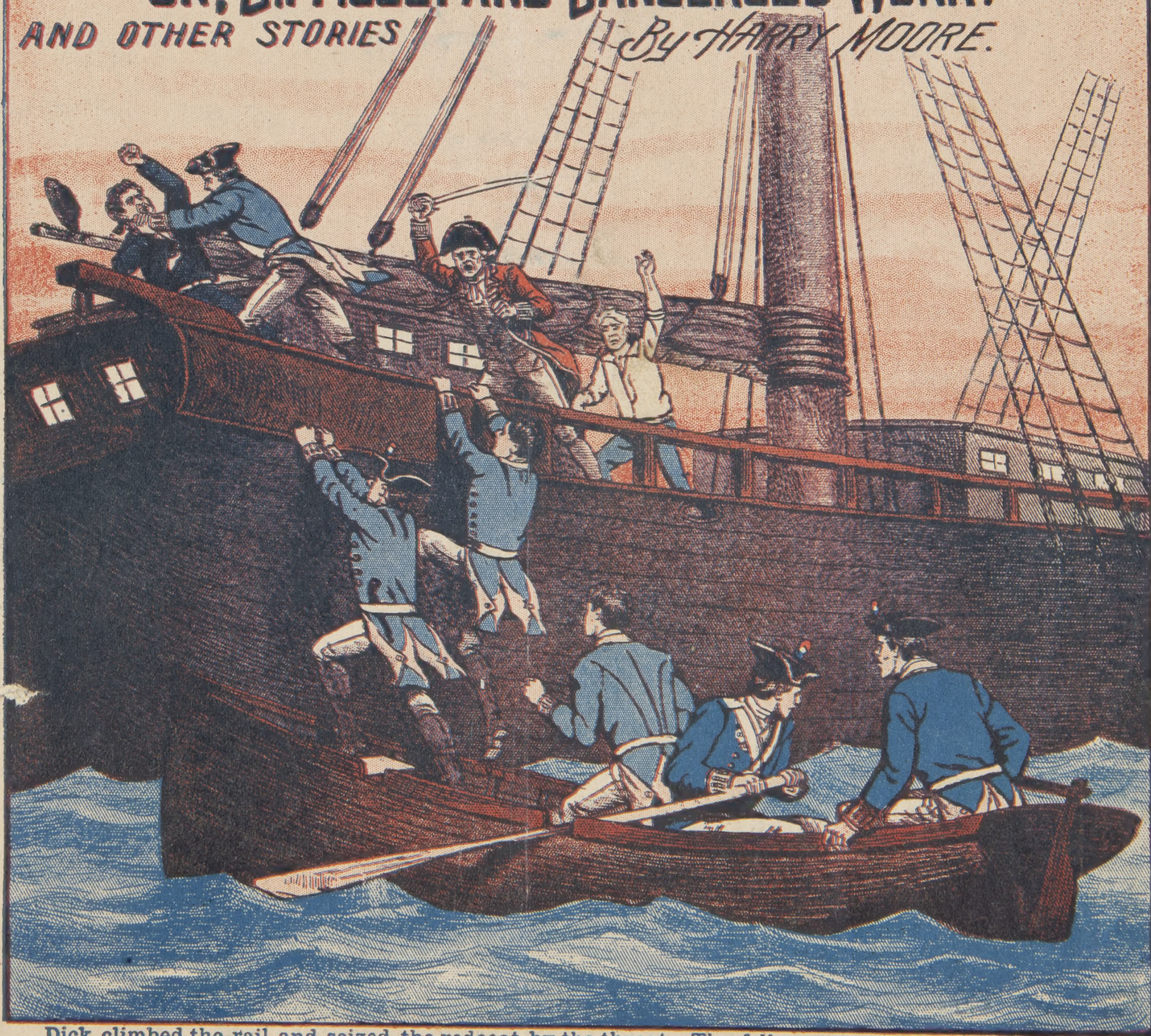
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NEW YORK, MAY 18, 1917.

Price SIX Cents.

THE LIBERTY BOYS IN NEW-YORK BAY; OR, DIFFICULT AND DANGEROUS WORK. AND OTHER STORIES

By HARRY MOORE.



Dick climbed the rail and seized the redcoat by the throat. The fellow managed to utter a startled cry, however, and two more redcoats came rushing out of the cabin. The other Liberty Boys followed Dick quickly, however, and a lively fight was instantly in progress.

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The Liberty Boys in New York Bay

—OR—

DIFFICULT AND DANGEROUS WORK

By HARRY MOORE.

CHAPTER I.

A BAD YOUTH.

One afternoon in the month of September of the year 1776 a youth of perhaps eighteen years was walking slowly along the East River wharf in the great city of New York.

The youth was dressed in the homespun blue suit of the period—clothing such as was worn by the country people.

On his feet were rough brogans, while his head was covered by an old slouch hat.

The young fellow looked like a green country youth in from the farm to see the sights of the city—that is, to the casual observer. To one who looked closely, however, and who noted the bronzed face, the keen, clear blue-gray eyes, the square chin and firm jaws, he would have appeared to be something more than a simple country boy.

The truth of the matter was that this young fellow was Dick Slater, who had already won a name for himself as a spy and also as a soldier, he and his Liberty Boys having done great work in the battle of Long Island and at Harlem Heights.

General Washington had already taken great interest in Dick, and had sent him on several spying expeditions, in all of which the boy was very successful.

And now Dick was in the city on a spying expedition.

The British army occupied New York at this time, and the patriot army was at Harlem Heights, stretched across from the Hudson River to the East River.

General Washington naturally wished to know what General Howe intended doing, or was trying to do, and he sent Dick as being more likely to succeed in securing the information than any one else.

The British headquarters were not far from the East River, and Dick was putting in the afternoon in their vicinity.

Suddenly as he walked slowly along he found himself confronted by a youth of twenty years. The young fellow in question was a typical young tough, such as are plentiful in all cities. He was heavy-set and had a pug nose, little, fishy eyes, and a generally belligerent look, and he swaggered as though he felt himself to be a person of some consequence.

Dick started to walk around the youth, but he would not have it that way, for he managed to keep in front of the Liberty Boy.

"Hello, country!" the young tough said, grinning.

"Hello, yourself," was the reply. Dick stopped, seeing that the other was intent on barring his way.

"Whar ye goin'?"

Dick was a good-natured fellow, as a rule, but he had taken a great dislike to this tough-looking youth, and his face flushed slightly and his eyes glinted dangerously, but he maintained a calm exterior, even though his blood was beginning to boil.

"I'm not going anywhere in particular," he said coldly.

"I guess ye hain't—not right now, 'tenny rate; ha, ha, ha!"

"What do you want?" asked Dick sharply.

The other stopped laughing and looked at the speaker in a rather surprised manner.

Then his eyes flashed with anger and he growled:

"Whut ye mean? Don' ye go fur ter axin' me questions, young feller!"

"You asked me one."

"I know I did; but thet's different."

"Why is it different?"

"'Cos et is."

"I don't see it that way. I think that I have as much right to ask you questions as you have to ask me."

"Waal, ye're mistook, thet's all. Ye see, I'm ther boss boy uv dis part uv de city; an' I hev er right ter ax questions uv enny boy whut comes foolin' aroun', an' dey wanten answur 'em, too, ye bet!"

"I don't care to ask any questions of you, or to answer any, either; so stand aside and let me pass." Dick's voice was quiet, but there was an intonation in it that the other interpreted as being threatening.

"See heer," he growled; "don' ye go fur ter torkin' sasy ter me. I'm Bud Buggston! I won't hev et, see!"

"Well, it rather seems to me that you began it," said Dick quietly.

"An' I've got a right ter."

"I don't acknowledge that."

"Oh, ye don', hey?" angrily.

"No."

"Waal, ye've gotter acknowlerdge et afore ye git past me, see?"

"I don't think I will do so," calmly.

"I'll show ye whether ye won' er not! Say, I'm goin' ter ax ye some questions, an' ye air goin' ter answur 'em mighty prompt, see?"

"I will if I want to."

"Oh, ye wull ef ye wan' to, hey?"

It was evident that the young tough was getting mad fast.

"That is what I said."

"Waal, ye'll wanten answur, ye bet! Er ef ye don' ye'll answur ennyhow!"

But Dick was beginning to grow tired of the bullying words and airs of the young tough.

"Get out of my way!" he said, suddenly and sharply.

Bud Buggston gasped. He was not used to being spoken to in this fashion.

"Say," he exclaimed, after a few moments, "air ye torkin' ter me?"

"I certainly am."

"Ter me—Bug Buggston?"

"Yes, Buggsy, even to you," coolly.

Again the young tough gasped.

He glared at Dick in open-mouthed amazement and anger.

"Say, did ye call me outer me name?" he cried. "Did ye call me Buggsy?"

"That's what I did—Buggsy."

"Say, what air ye, ennyhow? Hain't ye got enny sense, er air ye jest er plain fool?"

"Neither, I think. Why?"

"W'y, becos ef ye hed enny sense, er wuzn't er fool, ye'd never go fur ter tork sassy ter me."

"Why, are you such a very dangerous fellow, Buggsy?"

A howl of rage escaped the lips of the young tough.

"Thar ye go erg'in!" he cried. "Say, look at me!—look—at—me!"

"All right," was the cool reply; "I'm looking at you."

"Waal, ye see ther boss boy uv dis heer part uv der town, see? I'm tuff, ye bet!"

"You look it," calmly. "Yes, I should say that, unless you belie your looks, you are tough."

Bud Buggston realized that the supposed simple country youth was poking fun at him, and the knowledge rendered him almost wild.

"Say," he cried, "I'm goin' ter giv' ye er lickin', see? I'm goin' ter make ye wish't ye hed never torked sassy ter me."

"And let me tell you something, Buggsy," coldly and calmly; "if you try to give me a thrashing, you will be given the surprise of your life."

"How's thet?"

"Why, it will be you who will get licked."

"Bah! Ye kain't lick one side uv me!"

Then Bud Buggston leaped at Dick, striking out rapidly and fiercely.

CHAPTER II.

BUD BADLY BEATEN.

Dick had been forced into this affair against his will, but now that he was into it, he was determined to give a good account of himself.

There were a number of spectators present, drawn thither by the altercation, and Dick had guessed, from their grins and winks, that they thought he was going to get roughly handled. So he was determined that he would give Buggston a lesson and the spectators a surprise.

Dick was an expert boxer, and he put his skill into play, and had no difficulty in keeping the young tough from injuring him.

The Liberty Boy ducked some of the blows, evaded others and parried still others, and soon Buggston was panting at a great rate. In spite of his boasts that he was the "boss boy," Buggston was growing sadly winded. He was not in very good condition for a hard fight.

The spectators were surprised that Buggston did not speedily beat his antagonist to the wharf.

"Whut's ther matter with ye, Buggs?"

"Say, w'y don' ye knock his head off?"

"I thort ye wuz er fighter!"

"Wot ails ye, ennyhow?"

Such were a few of the exclamations, and they only served to make Buggston madder, without adding to his ability to inflict punishment on his cool and skillful adversary.

"I'll fix 'im, never ye fellers min'!" snarled the youth.

He made a fierce attack which lasted only a few moments, and then he was forced to cease striking out and get his breath. His arms seemed to weigh a ton, and they dropped like bars of lead.

This was Dick's opportunity, and he improved it. Buggston had moved around till now he was standing with his back toward the edge of the wharf and only about six feet from it.

Quick as a flash, Dick stepped in and struck Buggston a terrible blow in the chest.

Thump!

It sounded almost like a blow against an empty barrel with a club.

It was indeed a powerful blow.

The youth was hurled backward as though kicked by a mule, and over the edge of the wharf he flew and down into the waters of the East River.

Under he went, with a gurgling howl for help.

The spectators gave utterance to exclamations of amazement and wonder.

"Did ye ever!"

"Whut ye think uv thet!"

"Beats ennythin' I ever seen!"

"I wouldn' hev berleeved et!"

"He'll drown!" cried one, running to the edge of the wharf and looking down into the water.

"Whut, Bud drown?" sneered another. "Don' ye berleeve thet he'll drown! He kin swim like er duck!"

Just then a British officer, accompanied by a couple of common soldiers and four sailors, pushed through the crowd and approached Dick.

"Young fellow, you are all right!" the officer said approvingly, clapping Dick on the shoulder. "I saw that, and must say that you did it up brown."

Dick laughed.

"He would have it, sir," he said. "I didn't want to have any trouble with him, but he was determined to pick a fuss with me."

"So I noticed; and I'll wager that he is wishing now that he had not done so."

"Thar he is!" cried one of the 'longshoremen. "Bud's up an' swimmin', all right."

"Oh, ye couldn' drown 'im!" from another.

The British officer was eyeing Dick with interest.

"Say, you ought to make a good soldier," he said. "You thrashed that big fellow and did it very easily."

"Do you think I'd make a good soldier?" Dick queried.

"Yes, I'm sure of it."

"I'd like to be a soldier."

"Would you?"

"Yes."

"Then come along aboardship with me. I'll make a soldier of you in a year or two."

Dick thought swiftly. He wished to secure information regarding the intentions of General Howe, and it was possible that by going aboard one of the ships lying in the bay he might get information; while if he remained on shore he could not succeed. It was worth trying, anyway, and if he failed to learn anything on the ship he could drop overboard and swim ashore at any time.

"All right, sir, and thank you," he said. "I'll go with you."

"How about your parents? Will they object?"

"No, sir."

"Very good; you can go right aboard with us."

A boat lay near at hand, and they started toward it; but by this time Bug Buggston had scrambled back up onto the wharf, and he came running toward them, crying:

"Whar's ther young whelp whut done thet? Oh, lemme at 'im an' I'll kill 'im, thet's whut I'll do!"

The officer looked at Dick inquiringly.

"Will you meet him," he queried, "or shall we go aboard the ship at once?"

"Just as you say, sir. As for him"—nodding toward Buggston—"I can easily and quickly dispose of him."

"All right; give him another dose, then; the one he has received does not seem to have been quite sufficient."

Dick stepped out and confronted the angry tough youth.

Buggston, dripping wet from head to foot and wild with rage, hurled himself at Dick, intent on getting revenge for the treatment he had received.

Dick, with a smile on his face, stepped quickly aside, and as Bud passed him he stuck out his foot; Bud tripped over the foot and went headlong to the wharf and rolled over and over.

A great laugh went up from the officer, soldiers and sailors, and even the 'longshoremen whose sympathies had been with Bud. They could not help admiring the ability of the strange youth to take care of himself.

The young tough lay still in a semi-dazed condition for a few minutes and then struggled to his feet, stood there a few moments to get his bearings, after which he again advanced upon Dick, but this time more slowly and with caution.

"I'm goin' ter ha'f kill ye!" he hissed.

"Oh, don't!" said Dick, in a voice of simulated pleading.

With a snarl of rage, Buggston leaped forward, striking out wildly and fiercely.

But Dick did not dally with his opponent this time; instead, he dealt blow for blow, and his blows landed, whereas the other fellow's blows were for the most part wasted on the empty air.

Suddenly Dick caught the other between the eyes and sent him to the wharf with a thump. Bud's head struck hard, and he was rendered unconscious.

"He'll be all right in a few minutes; come along with us," said the officer.

Then he added:

"What is your name?"

"Fred Sparks, sir."

"All right, Fred."

They entered the boat, leaving the 'longshoremen to attend

to Bud and bring him to, and soon they were pulling away toward a ship which lay almost opposite the mouth of the East River and perhaps two hundred yards from Bedloe's Island.

They reached this ship presently and were soon on its deck.

"Come with me, Fred," said the officer, who was a captain.

He led the way to the quarters occupied by his company and said to the soldiers, with a gesture toward Dick:

"Men, here is a new recruit. His name is Fred Sparks, and, although he is an American, he is a good king's man, and he can fight like a tiger—so look out how you fool with him!"

"Oh, you can fight, can you?" cried one of the soldiers.

He was a heavy-set, dark-faced fellow, and it was plain that he was bad-tempered and vicious.

Dick looked at the speaker and sized him up instantly as being the bully of the company, and perhaps of the ship. He had that look, and while the Liberty Boy was a very peaceable youth and averse to fighting, as a rule, yet when he encountered men of this stripe he was never backward in teaching them a lesson—for Dick Slater was phenomenally strong and athletic, and was an expert boxer, and few men there were who could stand before him. In truth, Dick had never yet met one who could do so.

So now he looked at the soldier calmly and replied quietly but with a slight intonation of defiance:

"Yes, I can fight when I have to."

"But you won't fight unless you do 'ave to, eh?" with a sneering laugh.

"Possibly that is true. Anyway, I have not come here to fight my comrades, but to become a soldier and fight for the king."

"Well, you can't fight for the king unless you 'ave proved yourself a good hall-round fighter. Hi'm the champion hoy this 'ere ship, and Hi guess Hi'll 'ave to try you hout."

The other soldiers exchanged glances and then looked at Dick with some interest. It was plain that they were eager to see how he would take this. The captain had stepped into his stateroom, which adjoined the quarters occupied by the men, but the door was ajar, and it was evident that he could hear all that was said.

"You mean that I am to fight you?" queried Dick.

"Just that, younker."

"But I don't see why I should do so. We have nothing to fight about."

"'Aven't we?" chuckled the bully. "Then we'll make something," and he stepped forward and gave Dick a smart slap on the side of the face with his open hand.

"'Ow's that?" with a chuckle. "Now Hi guess that we 'ave something to fight habout—that is, hif you 'ave sand enough to be a soldier hoy the king."

Quick as a flash out shot Dick's fist.

Spat!

It struck the dark-faced redcoat on the forehead and with such terrible force did it land that the man was knocked down as though struck with a club in the hands of a giant.

A gasp of amazement went up from the spectators.

CHAPTER III.

ON SHIPBOARD.

Evidently they had not expected anything like this.

The captain was now standing in the doorway of his stateroom, and there was a smile of satisfaction on his face.

"I believe that the youngster will thrash Migsby," was his thought.

"Wonderful!"

"That was a terrible jolt!"

"A splendid blow!"

"Hi guess Migsby don't think so!"

The bully was a tough fellow, and while the blow and fall he had received would have rendered an ordinary man unconscious, he leaped up quickly, apparently not much the worse for it.

"Hi'll kill you, blast your heyes!" he almost shouted.

He leaped toward Dick, his great hands outstretched ready to grasp his intended victim.

The other soldiers stared in silence, and from the looks on their faces it was evident that they feared the young recruit would suffer.

The truth was that Migsby was known to be cruel-hearted, a typical bully indeed, and they feared he would almost kill the young fellow who had handled him so roughly.

It was so evident that the bully thought that if he could get hold of the youth he could thrash him easily, that Dick decided to accommodate him.

"He prides himself on his strength, and has been bullying and cowing his comrades because of his physical prowess, doubtless," thought Dick; "and if I can meet him at his own game and beat him it will teach him a lesson, and will result in freeing his comrades and put a stop to his bullying. I think I can beat him, and I'll do it."

All this flashed through Dick's mind in an instant, as it were, and then he and Migsby came together, each grasping the other.

"Now Hi've got you!" hissed the soldier.

"That remains to be seen," said Dick, and then began a struggle such as none there had ever before witnessed.

Dick, as has been stated, was phenomenal as regards strength. He was more than twice as strong as an ordinary youth of his age, and he quickly satisfied himself that he was stronger than this bully, despite the fellow's heavier build.

He was much quicker and more active, too, and this helped him.

Around and around the two moved, and presently Dick got the hold he had been working for.

Near them was an open porthole, and suddenly Dick, exerting all his wonderful strength, lifted the bully and threw him headfirst through the porthole.

Exclamations of amazement escaped the lips of the spectators.

"Wonderful!"

"Remarkable!"

"Astounding!"

"Who would have believed it possible!"

Such were a few of the exclamations, and the captain clapped his hands and cried:

"I believed it possible, men. In fact, I was sure that this young man could thrash Migsby, and I will add that I am glad that he has proven himself to be the better man. It will teach Migsby a much-needed lesson."

"True," agreed one of the soldiers.

"Say, Hi don't believe that 'e can swim!" cried another.

"Go up and see if you can render him assistance in case he needs it," commanded the captain.

Several of the soldiers rushed up on deck and found that some sailors were already in a boat which had been lowered quickly and were rescuing the soldier.

"What does it mean?" an officer inquired. "How came he to fall out of the porthole?"

"He was thrown out," explained one of the soldiers.

"Thrown out?" in amazement.

"Yes, sir."

"Isn't that Migsby, the bully?"

"Yes, it's Migsby."

"Well, whom have you that was able to handle him in that fashion?"

"A new recruit did it, sir. A young fellow who came aboard with Captain Seldon."

"What—that young fellow?"

"Yes."

"But—he is only a boy!"

"True, he is only a boy in years, but he is the best man that I have ever seen. He lifted Migsby bodily and tossed him through the porthole as though he were no more than a bundle of straw."

"Remarkable!"

"True, sir."

Migsby was now on the deck and walked to the quarters occupied by his company, leaving a streak of water behind him on the deck where it had dripped off his clothes. His head was downcast, and there was a disconcerted, sullen look on his face.

The other soldiers followed him down, more than half expecting that he would attempt to murder the youth who had handled him so roughly.

But he did not attack Dick at all. He glared at the youth, but that was all.

It was evident, however, that he hated the young fellow who had humiliated him in the eyes of his comrades, and all felt that the new recruit would do well to keep his eyes open when Migsby was around.

Dick appeared to be calm and unconcerned, but the truth

was that he more than half expected further trouble, and he was ready for it had it come.

The soldiers and sailors all wanted to get a look at the youth who had thrown Migsby through the porthole, and when he came on deck with the other members of the company for the exercise drill he was looked at with interest and curiosity.

About nine o'clock an orderly came and told Dick that he was wanted on deck.

"The commander of the ship wishes to speak to you," he ship.

Dick went with the orderly and found the commander of the ship and several more officers, among them Captain Seldon, together with another officer that Dick had not seen before.

This officer looked at Dick keenly and searchingly, and then said:

"Yes, I am sure that I am not mistaken. This young fellow is the rebel spy, Dick Slater."

The officers glared at the Liberty Boy threateningly, and angry murmurs went up from their lips.

Dick realized that he was in imminent danger.

CHAPTER IV.

THE "MARINE TURTLE."

The Liberty Boy did some swift thinking.

He knew that it would not do any good to deny his identity; he would not be believed, and as he would undoubtedly be made a prisoner, unless he made his escape at once, he decided to do this, if such a thing were possible.

He whirled suddenly and made a dash for the side of the ship.

Two or three made a grab at him, but missed.

Yells of surprise and exclamations escaped the lips of all:

"Seize him!"

"Grab him!"

"Don't let him get away!"

"Shoot him!"

These exclamations were uttered simultaneously, of course.

Then over the rail Dick shot and down toward the water he went.

To his surprise he did not land in the water, but in what he supposed must be a boat. He struck against a human form, for he heard a muffled exclamation.

Then he heard a peculiar grating noise, and this was followed by a movement of the boat.

One thing Dick did not understand, and that was that, while the night was a clear, starlit one, he could no longer see the stars. In fact, he was surrounded by inky darkness.

Where was he?

What kind of a boat was he in?

These were the questions that came to him, and of course he could not answer them.

He could make out by the feeling that the boat was in motion, and now, being sure that they were far enough away from the ship so that his voice would not be heard, Dick said, in a low, cautious voice:

"Who are you?"

"Sh!" came the reply. "Will explain all in due time."

But Dick could not control his feeling of curiosity, and asked:

"What kind of a boat is this?"

"You will learn that in good time," was the reply.

Perhaps an hour passed, and then the boat came to a stop.

Then there was the sound of flint striking against steel, and presently there was a light, and Dick got a sight of his companion.

The youth was so amazed by his surroundings, however, that he did not give the man more than a fleeting glance. He now saw that he was not in an ordinary boat at all, but in what had the appearance of two small boats, one placed on top of the other, and with a sliding door in the top.

After glancing around him in amazement, Dick again looked at the man.

"What does it mean?" he queried. "What kind of a boat is this?"

"This is a submarine boat."

Dick started.

"A—what?"

"A submarine boat."

"Do you mean a boat that goes beneath the water?"

"Yes."

Dick stared.

"Why," he almost gasped, "I would not have believed that such a thing was possible!"

"It is, though. You came all the way from the warship to this place under the water."

"Well, well! And who, if I may ask, are you?"

"My name is David Bushnell, and I am from Saybrook, Connecticut."

"And you invented this boat?"

"Yes."

"What do you think of doing with it? To what use do you intend putting it?"

The man looked keenly at Dick and said:

"You are a patriot, I believe?"

Dick nodded.

"I am, though you may not think so because of my coming off a British warship."

The man smiled.

"But the manner in which you came off," he said. "I heard the British denounce you as being Dick Slater, the rebel spy, and I was just wondering if I could do anything to help you when you came down in the hold of the Turtle, and the problem was solved."

"You call this the 'Turtle'?"

"Yes, the 'Marine Turtle.'"

Dick was silent, while he glanced around at the interior of the little vessel.

The quarters were exceedingly small, being, but little more than enough room for the two to sit there comfortably.

Then the youth looked at the man.

"You are a patriot?" he queried.

The man nodded.

"I am," he said.

"And you are thinking of placing this boat at the disposal of General Washington for use against the British?"

"I am. I was making a trial, or experimental, trip when you dropped in on me, and it was my intention to go up the river in the morning and secure an interview with General Washington."

Dick was eager and excited.

"Do it!" he exclaimed.

"I will."

"What kind of work do you think may be done with this submarine boat, Mr. Bushnell?"

"Some very damaging work to the British, Mr. Slater."

"Indeed?"

"Yes; this is something more than a mere submarine boat."

Dick looked surprised and interested.

"In what way?" he queried.

"Well, it is an 'infernal machine,' as well as a boat."

"An 'infernal machine'?"

"Yes."

The youth glanced around him. He saw several small boxes and other articles, but of course their contents were mysteries to him.

"Will you explain?" he asked.

Mr. Bushnell nodded, and laying his hand on one of the boxes in question, said:

"This is an infernal machine. In other words, it is a magazine of gunpowder, and it is so arranged that it may be secured to the bottom of a ship."

"Ah!" murmured Dick.

"In this magazine is a clock-work arrangement," the inventor went on, "and it is fixed so that the clock-work may be started, and after a certain length of time it will operate a spring which will communicate a blow to a detonating cap, and this will ignite the magazine and cause an explosion. This infernal machine is sufficient, I feel sure, to blow the biggest warship in the bay out of water!"

Dick's eyes sparkled with excitement.

"Say, that will be great!" he exclaimed. "I don't see why we can't destroy the British fleet!"

"I think it may be done."

They talked a while longer, the inventor explaining the workings of the boat and of the infernal machine.

When he had explained all, Dick said:

"Where are we now?"

in 1776 ③

"In a little bay about half a mile north of the edge of the city."

"Why not go on up to the patriot encampment," suggested Dick, "then you will be there in the morning ready to show the boat to General Washington."

"I guess that is what I will do."

"How do you manage to guide the boat at night and under the water?" queried Dick.

"There is a glass pane here that I can see through. I don't let the boat down under the water, save when it is absolutely necessary."

"I see."

Mr. Bushnell blew out the candle, and then waiting a few minutes for his eyes to get accustomed to the darkness, he set the propelling machinery in motion, and they were en route for the patriot encampment, which was about seven miles up the Hudson River.

It was a long journey for the slow-moving craft to make, and it was not until the small hours of the morning that they reached their destination.

Dick invited Mr. Bushnell to go up to the Liberty Boys' quarters in the encampment, but the inventor refused the invitation.

"I will stay with my boat," he said.

Dick understood that the man was solicitous about the safety of the craft, and so did not insist.

He bade the man good-morning and went to his quarters and was soon asleep.

CHAPTER V.

THE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF FAVORABLY IMPRESSED.

"General Washington, this is Mr. Bushnell, of Saybrook, Connecticut."

It was morning, and Dick Slater, accompanied by Mr. Bushnell, had gone to headquarters and had just been admitted to the presence of the commander-in-chief of the patriot army of America.

General Washington looked at Dick's companion with interest and extended his hand.

"I am glad to make your acquaintance, Mr. Bushnell's," he said.

"And I am glad to know you, your excellency," was the reply.

Mr. Bushnell was a man of middle age, and was evidently well educated, and a gentleman.

"Your excellency," said Dick, when they had taken seats; "Mr. Bushnell is an inventor, and he has an invention which he wishes to bring to your attention."

"An inventor? The commander-in-chief looked inquiringly at the man.

"Yes, your excellency," was the reply.

"What is this invention, sir?"

"It is a sub-marine boat, sir, with an infernal machine attachment."

"Ah!"

"With this boat, sir, I believe it to be possible to destroy the British fleet."

General Washington started. He looked at the inventor eagerly and with interest.

"Where is the boat?" he asked.

"Down at the river, sir."

"I must see it!"

"Just what I wish you to do, sir."

"We will go down and look at it at once."

The commander-in-chief summoned his orderly, and as soon as his hat been brought to him they set out.

Colonel Hamilton came up as they were starting away and was asked to accompany them, as the commander-in-chief thought a great deal of the young officer and had a high regard for his judgment.

They were soon down at the river and there lay the "Marine Turtle."

They paused and stood looking at the peculiar boat a few minutes, after which Mr. Bushnell opened the sliding door and showed them the interior and explained the workings of the machinery.

Mr. Bushnell was an expert machinist, and he had indeed built a very clever machine, and one that seemed capable of doing all that he claimed for it.

He explained that he had made a number of trips in the boat, and Dick told how its presence beside the warship the

night before had been the means of enabling him to escape without getting wet even.

General Washington and Colonel Hamilton were both greatly impressed with the boat, and the former said that he would be glad to make use of it.

"Would you mind showing us how it works, Mr. Bushnell?" he queried.

"I shall be only too glad to do so, your excellency; but in order to get a good understanding of how it works, one should be inside."

"I don't think you ought to risk making a trip in it, sir," said Colonel Hamilton, quickly.

"I simply wish to see the boat move about, Mr. Bushnell, and also to disappear beneath the surface," said the commander-in-chief.

"Very well; that is simple enough, sir."

He got in and closed the sliding door. Then almost immediately the boat began to move out into the stream. Perhaps two feet square of the surface of the boat was visible, and it was easy to keep track of the movements of the unique little vessel.

The boat went out perhaps fifty yards, moved in a circle, and then headed back toward the shore. When within ten yards of the shore it stopped and then slowly sank beneath the water.

It disappeared from sight completely, and the commander-in-chief and Colonel Hamilton stared in wonder.

"Remarkable!" the former exclaimed.

"You are right, your excellency," said the colonel.

They watched the spot where the boat had disappeared from view perhaps five minutes, and then, as nothing was seen of it, the two officers became uneasy.

"Something must have happened to the mechanism!" exclaimed General Washington.

"He is staying down quite a while, sure enough," said the colonel.

But Dick, who was looking all around on the surface of the water, suddenly exclaimed:

"Yonder it is!"

He pointed toward a point a couple of hundred yards up the stream from where the boat had disappeared from view, and there, sure enough, was the top of the strange craft cleaving the water.

"Well, well!" exclaimed General Washington; "that certainly is a fine invention!"

"It is, indeed!" from the colonel.

"If his 'infernal machine' will work successfully when applied to the bottom of the British warships, then I see no reason why we should not destroy a goodly portion of the fleet and put the rest to flight."

"I think it will work all right, your excellency. The fact that the boat itself does so argues that the other will be successful."

"I am inclined to believe that you are right."

A few moments later the unique little craft came to a stop at the shore, and the sliding door opened and the inventor rose and stood erect, a smile on his face.

"Well, your excellency, what do you think of it?" he asked.

"It seems to work splendidly, Mr. Bushnell."

"Yes, sir; and I am confident that, with someone to aid me, I can sink a number of the British warships."

"Ah, you want an assistant, eh?"

"Yes, sir."

The commander-in-chief looked at Dick, who met the inquiring glance with one of eager anticipation.

"How would this young man do, Mr. Bushnell?" General Washington asked, nodding toward Dick.

The inventor's face lighted up.

"Fine!" he said, "he has already made a trip with me, and will not be afraid to make others, I am sure."

"I shall be only too glad to go with you, Mr. Bushnell, and will do my very best to be of value to you as an assistant."

"Then it is settled," said General Washington; "you two will go to work just as soon as you like, and I hope that you may succeed in destroying some of the British vessels."

"We will do our best, your excellency," said Mr. Bushnell.

"And we will see what we can do this very night."

"Very good," and then, after some further talk, the commander-in-chief and Colonel Hamilton returned to headquarters, leaving Mr. Bushnell and Dick to make their preparations for the trip down into New York Bay.

The Liberty Boys knew what Dick was going to do, and they were somewhat blue, for they feared that he might lose his life.

He laughed at them, however, and declared that he would be in no more danger than if he were to remain in camp. He could not make them believe this, though.

The day passed at last, and then Mr. Bushnell and Dick got into the "Marine Turtle" and set out on their perilous venture.

CHAPTER VI.

THE TORY BOY'S STORY.

"General Howe, there is a boy outside who wishes to see you."

The British commander-in-chief, who was seated before a desk in his private room at headquarters down in New York City, looked at his orderly in some surprise.

"A boy?" he remarked.

"Yes, your excellency."

"Who is he?"

"He says that his name is Hal Hawley, and that he is a loyal king's subject."

The commander-in-chief looked somewhat puzzled.

"I wonder if it is worth my while bothering with him," he muttered. "How old a boy is he?"

"About twelve, sir; he says he has important information for you."

"Indeed?"

"Yes, sir; and he is a bright-looking young chap."

The commander-in-chief hesitated a few moments and then said:

"Show him in."

The orderly bowed and withdrew.

He was gone only a few minutes, and then he returned and ushered a boy into the room.

"Master Hal Hawley, your excellency," he said, and then withdrew, closing the door.

The boy had doffed his hat and stood there looking at the commander-in-chief.

The great man eyed the boy searchingly, and noted that he was, as the orderly had stated, a bright-looking little fellow.

"Well, Master Hawley, what can I do for you?" he queried, presently.

"I have some information which I thought maybe might be of value to you, sir," was the reply.

"Ah, indeed? What is the information?"

"I live six miles north of the city over near the river, sir, and this morning as I was taking up some fish-lines that I had out over night I saw something that I thought you might be interested in."

The commander-in-chief looked interested. He motioned toward a chair, saying:

"Sit down and tell me all about it."

The boy took the seat and then went on:

"I was sitting beside a clump of bushes, sir, when I heard voices and presently there came four men. They reached the river at a point perhaps twenty yards from me, and I hid and watched them."

General Howe nodded and said:

"Go on."

"Two of the men were rebel officers, and one was, I am sure, the commander-in-chief."

"Ah!" General Howe was deeply interested now.

"One of the others was a man about forty-five years old, dressed in citizen's clothes, and the other a young fellow, also dressed in citizen's clothes."

"Well?"

"I peered out through the bushes, sir, and I saw something that I had not noticed before—a funny-looking boat. It was roofed over and had a sliding door in the top."

"Ha!" General Howe sat up straight and eyed the boy eagerly.

"They all talked a little while, and then the man with citizen's clothes on opened the sliding-door and they all looked down through the opening, and after a while this man got down through it and the door went shut. A little while after that the boat moved away from the shore. It looked funny, sir, with only a small bit of it sticking up

out of the water. It looked like a bug turtle swimming along."

"Ha!" exclaimed the commander-in-chief again. "A sub-marine boat, I'll wager!"

"This boat moved out quite a way, sir, went around in a circle, and then suddenly it went out of sight underneath the water!"

"I knew it!—a sub-marine boat, sure enough!" General Howe exclaimed. "Go on, my boy! Tell me all that you saw!"

The boy did so, and when he had finished his story General Howe summoned the orderly.

"Get all the members of my staff here as quickly as possible," was his order.

"Yes, your excellency," said the orderly, and he bowed and withdrew.

While waiting for the coming of the officers, the commander-in-chief asked a number of questions, all of which were answered promptly by the boy.

When the members of the staff arrived the commander-in-chief laid the matter before them.

They listened in amazement.

They were evidently greatly surprised and also alarmed, for they exchanged glances in which was considerable apprehension.

"What do you think about this matter, General Howe?" asked General Cornwallis.

"I fear that our ships are in danger," was the reply.

"You think that this sub-marine boat may be capable of doing damage, then?"

"Yes, such is my belief."

The majority of the officers expressed the same belief.

"What is to be done?" one queried.

"I hardly knew," said General Howe. "Unless the ships put out to sea, a watch will have to be kept for signs of the dangerous craft."

"But if it stays under the water, we will be unable to see it," said one of the officers.

"It won't stay under all the time."

"True; and it is possible that it may be sighted when a well-directed shot from a cannon may put an end to danger from that quarter."

"That's so," agreed Cornwallis.

They all took turns and asked questions of the boy.

Having finished this, they again fell to discussing the affair, and finally General Howe said:

"I will go aboard the flagship and see my brother, the admiral, and warn him. Perhaps he may know better what should be done than we can know."

"True," agreed General Cornwallis. "I will accompany you."

Before they started they gave the boy a couple of gold-pieces and told him to return to his home and to keep watch, and if he saw anything more that was of interest to come and report to them.

The boy said that he would do so, and took his departure, hugely pleased.

Generals Howe and Cornwallis went aboard Admiral Howe's flagship at once and told him what they had learned. He listened intently, but they could see that he was not greatly impressed.

"I don't think there is any danger to speak of," he said. "I have never heard of a sub-marine craft that was successful, and I do not have much fear that this one will prove successful."

"But the boy saw it in successful operation," insisted General Howe.

"I know; he saw it moving about and saw it disappear beneath the water, but what possible harm could such little craft do to our great warships?"

"The operator of the boat may have infernal machines with which to blow up the ships," suggested General Cornwallis.

But Admiral Howe shook his head.

"I am not afraid," he said. "However, we will use extra precautions, and will keep a close watch for the thing. If it shows up, a cannon-ball from one of the pivot-guns will quickly end its existence and the life of its operator."

"I hope so," said General Howe.

After some further talk the two generals returned to headquarters on shore.

Admiral Howe communicated the news to the commanders of the different warships and ordered them to keep a sharp lookout for a craft that looked like a huge turtle.

CHAPTER VII.

A TERRIBLE CATASTROPHE.

Mr. Bushnell and Dick Slater, in the "Marine Turtle," moved slowly down the Hudson River.

The tide was with them, and this made it easy going for the strange little craft.

Mr. Bushnell did not use the propelling machinery at all, but simply let the boat drift along.

Two hours later they were in the bay.

As it was quite dark, they did not go under the surface of the water, but moved along at the surface.

They soon made a discovery, however: This was that a row of lanterns was hanging along the rail clear around each and every warship, thus making a wide band of light, into which the boat could not enter without being seen.

Mr. Bushnell set the reversing machinery to work and held the boat stationary, while he and Dick discussed the matter.

"I wonder why those lanterns are out?" remarked the inventor.

"I don't know," replied Dick. "Looks a little bit as though the British had been warned that danger threatened."

"So it does; they did not have the lanterns out last night."

"No; it seems to be a new departure."

"Well, the question is: What shall we do?"

"Let's sink beneath the water and venture up to one of the ships, anyway, and see what happens, Mr. Bushnell."

"All right; they may not discover us."

"No, not if we don't come up till we are close under the bow or stern."

Mr. Bushnell pulled a lever and the boat sank beneath the water.

Then he started the propelling machinery and the boat moved forward.

It moved slowly, for the inventor knew that the work of getting up under the stern of the ship was precarious, to say the least.

Finally, however, this was done.

The little boat lay just under the stern of one of the warships.

"Now the question is: Can we fasten an infernal machine to the hull?" whispered Mr. Bushnell.

"We can only learn that by trying," was Dick's reply.

"True. Well, I'll open the sliding-door, and you see if you can bore holes in the hull with this bit. If you can, we will fasten the infernal machine to the hull with screws, and then will start the clockwork and get out of the way."

Mr. Bushnell slid the door gently back, and Dick, bit in hand, rose up through the opening and began trying to bore a hole in the ship's hull.

He worked a few minutes and then dropped down into the boat and whispered to his companion:

"I can't bore a hole."

"Why not?" was the question.

"Because the ship's bottom is coated with copper and I can't bore through it."

"Ha! I never thought of that!"

"I wonder if any of the ships are without the copper-sheathing?"

"I don't know; but I should think the bit would cut copper. Let me give it a trial."

He got out of the way, and Mr. Bushnell got up and tried the bit.

He worked perhaps ten minutes, and then dropped down into the boat and whispered:

"You are right, Dick; the bit won't penetrate the copper sheathing."

"I didn't think you could do it, sir."

"No; and now the question is: What shall we do?"

"Let's go from vessel to vessel; perhaps we may find one that has no copper on its hull."

"All right; we will do that."

The sliding-door was closed, and then the propelling machinery was set in motion after the boat had been submerged, and it was headed toward another ship.

Presently they came up under the stern of another warship.

Mr. Bushnell opened the door, and Dick rose, bit in hand, and tried to bore a hole in the hull.

Presently he dropped down into the boat, with the whispered remark:

"It's no use, sir; the copper is there and is too thick to be penetrated."

"That is too bad."

"So it is; but let's keep on looking. We may find a ship without the sheathing on the bottom."

"Yes, so we may."

The door was slid shut and the boat was submerged, and then again it moved away toward another ship.

This was kept up till nearly morning, and all the ships that had been visited had thick copper sheathing on their hulls; but about an hour before sunrise they found a sloop-of-war that was unsheathed. Only the bare wood was there, and it was not difficult to bore holes in this.

In a little more than half an hour they had bored the holes and screwed the infernal machine to the sloop's bottom. Then Mr. Bushnell started the clockwork, and, dropping back into the boat, closed the sliding-door.

"Now to get away from here as quickly as possible!" he murmured.

He submerged the boat and set the propelling machinery in motion.

Slowly the Marine Turtle moved away.

And when it was only a comparatively short distance from the sloop there came a loud explosion.

Evidently the clockwork had not worked right, or else Mr. Bushnell had not given himself time enough, for the little boat was close to the sloop when the explosion took place and it was hurled out of the water and fell back, bottomside up!

Dick and Mr. Bushnell were badly shaken up, but were not seriously injured.

"Great guns, but that was a terrible explosion!" exclaimed Dick.

"Yes, so it was," agreed Mr. Bushnell, and then, gazing about him with a rueful look, he went on:

"What are we going to do, Mr. Slater?"

"I don't know," he replied presently.

"You see, we are wrongside up, my boy."

"I see that."

"And it is my belief that we are on the surface of the water instead of beneath it."

"Do you think so?"

"Yes."

"Well, we must get out of here and try to get the boat turned back on its right side."

"Yes; but how are we going to get out?"

"Can't we open the sliding-door?"

"Yes; but the water will rush in and the boat will sink."

"That's so; and we could not get it back up to the surface again."

"No; the boat would be a loss."

"Well, we don't want that that shall happen if we can help it."

"No."

Both were thoughtful for a few minutes, and then Dick said:

"I wonder if that sloop-of-war was blown to pieces?"

"Likely—or at least she was damaged so that she sank."

"I don't see how it could be otherwise."

"Nor I."

Then again they lapsed into silence and looked thoughtful. They were trying to think of some way of escaping from their unpleasant predicament, and at the same time save the boat.

This was a hard problem.

There ought to be some way out of it, however, they thought, and they kept on trying to figure out the way.

Presently a deep, sullen boom-m-m-m! came to their hearing.

"What was that?" remarked Mr. Bushnell.

Dick knew. He had heard the boom! of the cannon too often not to know what it was, and he told Mr. Bushnell that a cannon had been fired off.

The inventor turned pale.

"Say, Mr. Slater," he murmured; "they must be firing at us!"

"Do you think so?"

"Yes; it is daylight now, you know, else we could not see anything as we have been able to do for some little time, and they have caught sight of the boat."

Then to their ears came again the sullen noise of the cannon:

Boom-m-m-m-m!

"Jove, supposing they hit the boat!" exclaimed Dick.

"It will be the last of the Marine Turtle, Mr. Slater."

"Yes, and probably the last of us, too!"

"That's so; probably we had better open the door and get out, even though the boat sinks and we never get it again. It might as well go to the bottom and stay as to be torn to pieces by a cannon-ball."

"That's so."

"Yes; I'll open the sliding-door. Be ready to dive through."

"Very well."

Mr. Bushnell got down on his knees and took hold of the knob and turned it; then he pushed; but the door did not move.

He pushed harder.

Still it did not budge.

"It has been sprung slightly by the force of the explosion when the boat was turned over," he said. "Help me, Mr. Slater."

Dick got down beside Mr. Bushnell and added his strength to that of the other man, but though they pushed with all their might, they did not budge the door.

Finally, with perspiration streaming down over their faces, they ceased trying, and looked almost despairingly at each other.

"It's wedged tight; we can't open it!" gasped Mr. Bushnell.

"You are right, sir," agreed Dick.

"We will have to stay in here whether we want to or not, and take our chances of being killed when a cannon-ball tears the boat to pieces!"

"I guess you are right, Mr. Bushnell."

Then again sounded the sullen roar of the cannon:

Boom-m-m-m-m!

CHAPTER VIII.

ON LAND AGAIN.

The sloop-of-war that the infernal machine had been fastened to had indeed been torn to pieces when the explosion took place.

The sloop was not far from the flagship, and as the sun was just rising as the explosion took place, it was possible for the sentinels on the decks of all the ships to get a good view of the scene.

They saw the sloop rear up and then fall apart and drop back into the water, a hopeless wreck.

And on the air rose shrieks and screams of agony from the injured, while cries of help went up.

All was excitement on the decks of the warships very quickly, and the wharf along the south end of the city was lined with excited people who had heard the explosion and who came down to see what had happened.

The word was given to sailors on different ships, and they lowered their boats hastily and rowed to the wreck of the sloop.

They picked up the soldiers and sailors and carried them to the other ships.

When this had been accomplished there suddenly arose a cry from the deck of the flagship.

They had seen something that looked like the bottom of an upturned boat, and at once the cry went up:

"The submarine boat!"

"The infernal machine!"

The commanders of some of the ships at once ordered their guns to bring cannon to bear, and this was done.

Then soon the boom!-boom! of the cannon was heard, and the cannon-balls went spitting about the object in the water.

The object did not present much in the way of a target, as not more than two feet square of surface could be seen, but there were good gunners on board the vessels, and they did not doubt their ability to hit the mark, in case it did not disappear.

What all feared was that the submarine boat would sink out of sight; as the minutes passed and it did not do so they did not know what to think about it.

They were indeed puzzled, and then one officer suggested to his commander that probably the machinery had been damaged by the explosion and the operator within was unable to submerge the craft.

"In that case we can capture the vessel by sending men in boats," the commander said; "but before he could communicate with the other officers a cannon-ball hit the object fairly and tore it wide open."

The next moment it had disappeared beneath the surface and was seen no more.

A great cheer went up from the soldiers and sailors on the various vessels.

The gunner who had fired the successful shot was given three cheers.

A boat was lowered and sent to the spot where the submarine boat had gone down in the hope that the operator might be secured if he had not been killed.

No one was found, however, and the sailors pulled back to the ship.

There was great rejoicing both on the ships and among the officers and soldiers on shore, for it was believed that a great menace to the warships had been removed.

* * * * *

What of Dick and Mr. Bushnell?

When the cannon-ball struck the boat and tore it to pieces they were not in it.

Feeling sure that if a cannon-ball hit the boat they would be killed, they had worked desperately, and by prying and hammering at the door, had finally gotten it loosened so that they could slip it back.

This was done, and they then lowered themselves through the hole and into the water and swam away underneath the surface as far as they could go.

Then they came up, but were careful that only their mouths and noses should be above water, and they were not discovered by the redcoats.

In fact, the eyes of all were on the object in the water and so there would not have been much danger that the two would have been seen even had they swam openly.

"That's the last of the Marine Turtle!" said Mr. Bushnell sadly.

"Yes," said Dick; "but you have the satisfaction of knowing that it was a success, and that one vessel was destroyed through its agency."

"True; but I would have been much better pleased had we been able to destroy a number of the warships."

"So would I."

They did not say any more now, as they had to figure on where they should make a landing.

They decided to land over on Long Island, as they were nearer that shore than any other land.

Finally they reached the shore and they were careful to touch at a point where bushes grew right down to the water's edge.

They crawled up out of the water and in among the bushes.

Here they paused, and, after looking around to see that there was no one in sight, they doffed their outer clothing and touched at a point where bushes grew right down to the water.

Then they exchanged glances.

"What shall we do, Mr. Slater?" the inventor asked.

"Well, we must get back to the patriot encampment, and the question is, Which is the better way to go?"

"That is indeed the question."

They discussed the matter some time, and it was decided that the safest plan was for them to go across Long Island, diagonally in a northeasterly direction, till they reached the East River, and then to cross the river and make their way to the patriot encampment.

"It will be an all-day trip," said Dick; "but it is better to take plenty of time and be on the safe side."

"Yes, indeed."

They set out up the shore, and presently they came to a road. It led along the shore, but Dick suggested that it would be better if they went farther inland.

"I think you are right about that, Mr. Slater. Perhaps we may come to a road that leads in that direction presently."

"I think it likely that we will; indeed, if I remember aright, we will do so. You see, I was over here several times before the battle of Long Island."

"I understand."

Presently they came to a point where the road forked, one road leading to the left along the shore, the other leading to the right around the foot of a series of wooded hills.

They turned to the right and walked along at a fair pace.

"Say, I'm getting hungry," said Dick presently.

"And I," from Mr. Bushnell.

"Yonder is a farmhouse; perhaps we may be able to get our breakfast there."

"Perhaps so."

They stopped at the farmhouse and asked if they might have breakfast, and the man told them they might.

He eyed them suspiciously, as was only natural, perhaps, when their wet clothing is taken into account.

"Ye fellers must a-fell inter the water sumwhars," he said, with an inquiring glance.

"Yes," said Dick; "we were out in a boat fishing, and it upset and threw us into the water."

"Humph! And then, after a brief pause: "I wonder ef ye fellers know whut made thet big 'xploshun over in ther bay erwhile ago?"

"One of the ships blew us," said Dick.

"Sho! ye don't say! I wonder how thet happened?"

"I don't know; the powder magazine must have caught on fire somehow."

"Waal, I dare say! Eet made er loud noise, I tell ye!"

"So it did."

"But whut wuz thet firin' fur, afterwards? Frum ther cannon, I mean."

"I think they were firing in the hope of bringing the bodies of the dead soldiers and sailors to the surface."

"Mebby so."

The woman of the house now announced breakfast and they went in and sat up to the table.

They had nearly finished eating, when there sounded footsteps on the porch, and the woman, who was up from the table, looked out of the window and exclaimed:

"W'y, theer's some British sojers!"

Dick and Mr. Bushnell exchanged startled glances.

CHAPTER IX.

A GAME OF HIDE-AND-SEEK.

"I guess we had better step out, Mr. Bushnell!" said Dick.

"I think so, too."

They got up from the table hastily, put on their hats and hurried to the back door.

The woman was now at the front door and opening it, the redcoats having knocked.

The farmer was staring after Dick and Mr. Bushnell in amazement.

Just as the two disappeared through the rear doorway and pulled the door shut the redcoats strode into the other room.

"Good-morning," said the leader of the redcoats, a captain, nodding toward the farmer; "have you seen any stranger around here this morning?"

"I've seen er couple uv strangers, mister," was the reply.

"Ha! say you so?"

"Yas."

"They wuz jest eatin' breakfas' with us," from the woman.

"Where are they now?" eagerly.

The farmer pointed toward the rear door.

"They jest went out thet way," he said.

There were ten British soldiers, and they made a dash toward the door in question.

"We'll catch them and see who they are!" the captain cried.

They were out in the backyard quickly, and they caught sight of the two fugitives, who were heading for the hills.

"Stop! Stop!" roared the captain.

But, of course, Dick and Mr. Bushnell did not stop. They kept on running at their best speed—or, rather, at the best speed of which Mr. Bushnell was capable of going. Dick could have run faster, but he would not go on and leave his companion behind.

But the redcoats were not very good runners, either, and so the two held their own without much difficulty.

"We will soon be in among the trees," said Dick, "and then we will be able to give them the slip."

"I hope so."

"Oh, we can do it, I am certain."

On they ran, and presently they were in among the trees.

It was now harder work climbing the hill, but it would be as hard for their pursuers as it was for them, and so this would even matters up.

Up the slope they struggled, and at last they reached the top of the hill.

They paused a few moments to get their breaths and listen for sounds of pursuit.

They heard voices down the slope, and so, feeling that

they would have it easier going down than had been the case coming up, they again set out.

Their pursuers kept on coming, and when Mr. Bushnell and Dick were halfway down the slope they discussed their situation as they ran along.

"It won't do to get out in the open in broad daylight," said Dick.

"I judge that you are right, Mr. Slater."

"Then the only thing for us to do is to find a place in which to conceal ourselves till nightfall."

"You are right."

"But can we find such a place?"

"I don't know; we can try, at least."

They turned sharp to the right and ran along the side of the hill quite a distance.

Presently they came to a ravine which extended from the top of the hill clear to the bottom. It was a deep ravine and was filled with a tangled growth of bushes, small trees, etc., and the two saw at once that it would furnish them with a good place to hide.

"I don't believe that they will find us down in there," said Dick.

"Nor I, Mr. Slater."

They made their way down into the ravine, and soon found a place amid a dense growth of bushes, where they believed they would be safe from discovery.

The redcoats went on down to the open land, and then, not seeing the fugitives, they at once leaped to the conclusion that the latter had turned aside and hidden and let them pass.

They hesitated a bit, and then turned to the right and made their way along in that direction.

Presently they came to where the mouth of the ravine touched the plain, and here they stopped.

"That would be a fine place to hide," said the captain.

"You are right," from one of the soldiers.

"We'll find them in there, if anywhere."

"Likely enough."

"Come on, men."

They set out up the ravine.

The men, in pursuance to instructions from their leader, spread out so as to take in the whole width of the ravine.

"If they are in here we'll have them out!" the captain declared.

Slowly they advanced up the gulch, looking carefully as they went.

Dick and Mr. Bushnell, crouching in their hiding-place, heard the redcoats coming.

"They're coming up the ravine," said Dick.

"Yes, what shall we do?"

"I don't know."

"If we stay here they will find us."

"So they will, and it follows that we must not stay here."

"Which way shall we go?"

"We'll leave the ravine and go over to the northward."

They slipped up the sloping bank of the ravine and away through the timber.

"I guess we will be able to make our escape, all right," said Mr. Bushnell.

"I think so," agreed Dick.

They had just reached the top of the bank when they heard a yell.

They looked around, and about one hundred yards away they saw a redcoat, who was gesticulating and yelling to his comrades.

"Here they are!" the two heard him say. "I see 'em!"

He was joined quickly by a number of his comrades, and knowing that they must get away in a hurry, Dick and Mr. Bushnell set out on the run.

"After them!" they heard a voice say. "We will catch them this time, sure?"

"Perhaps you will and perhaps you won't!" murmured Dick grimly.

CHAPTER X.

A BRIGHT GIRL'S CLEVER SCHEME.

"I believe they have given up the search and gone back, Mr. Bushnell."

"I think so myself, Mr. Slater."

Dick and Mr. Bushnell stood on the edge of the timber and were looking out across the plain lying between them and the East River.

"I'm hungry, how is it with you, Mr. Bushnell?"

"It is the same with me."

"Yonder is a farmhouse," nodding toward a house which stood perhaps a quarter of a mile away.

"I see it."

"There is food to be had there."

"Undoubtedly."

"Then what do you say—shall we go and get something to eat?"

"I'm willing."

It was about one o'clock, and the two fugitives, after having dodged about for several hours, had thrown the pursuing redcoats off the track. At any rate, nothing was to be heard from them.

"Come along," said Dick.

They left the timber and started toward the house.

They looked back frequently, for they did not know but the redcoats might be hidden in the edge of the timber and come after them.

Nothing of the kind happened, however, and presently they reached the farmhouse.

It was the home of a patriot, who was glad to give the two food. Dinner was over, but there was plenty left, and the two ate heartily.

When they had finished Dick turned to Mr. Bushnell.

"Shall we risk going on now, or shall we wait till after nightfall?" he queried.

"I am very tired, Mr. Slater, as a result of my unusual exertions, and if it is all the same to you, I would prefer to remain here till evening," was the reply.

"That is satisfactory to me. Indeed, I think it is the safer plan."

"Very good. We will stay here, then."

They sat out upon the porch, and Mr. Bushnell and the farmer smoked, while Dick listened to the conversation between the two and took part in it occasionally.

About the middle of the afternoon Sarah, the farmer's daughter, came hastening around the corner of the house. On her arm was a basket filled with blackberries.

"The redcoats are coming!" she panted; "I have just come from up on the hillside, and I saw the redcoats. They are coming across the open ground now, and it will be impossible for you to leave the house without being seen!"

"Is there any hiding-place about the house?" queried Dick.

"No place, unless you go to the cellar or to the attic," replied Mr. Martin, the patriot.

"We'll risk the attic," said Dick. "Show us the way to it."

"I'll show you," cried the girl. "Father, you try and detain the redcoats downstairs a few minutes."

"All right, Sally."

The girl hastily entered the house, and Dick and Mr. Bushnell followed. She led the way up into the attic and then made her way back downstairs.

The two looked around them.

The attic was about like all such, and while there was no chance to conceal themselves, yet, as their enemies would have to come up through the opening singly, the two would be able to hold the fort, they felt certain.

Meanwhile the girl had reached the ground floor and found her father engaged in conversation with the leader of the redcoats, a captain. It was, indeed, the same force that had been searching for Dick and Mr. Bushnell and pursuing them all the forenoon.

"There are no rebels here," Sarah heard her father say, as she entered the sitting-room.

"We cannot take your word for it, my man," said the captain. "You may be telling the truth, and then again you may not. We will make a search of the house."

"You are quite at liberty to do so, sir," Mr. Martin said. Of course, it would not have availed him anything to say that the search should not be made.

"Perhaps the gentlemen are hungry or thirsty, father," said Sarah. "There is a barrel of splendid cider in the cellar, and—"

"Cider! Cider!" the soldiers cried eagerly. "Let's 'ave some cider, captain!"

"After we search the house, men; we—"

"Oh, we can station four of the boys where they can see any one that tries to leave the house, and we can have the cider first, captain."

"Oh, all right."

It was plain that the officer himself was thirsty.

Four of the men took up positions outside at points that would enable them to see any one who might leave the house; the rest went to the cellar, Mr. Martin going along to show them which barrel to draw the cider from.

It was hard cider, and soon the soldiers were drinking at a great rate.

They sent out a pailful to the sentinels, and they were soon as busily engaged as their comrades in the cellar.

The more the redcoats drank, the less they thought about the business that had brought them to the spot and an hour later they were all so drunk that they could not stand.

Those in the cellar dropped down where they were, and the four sentinels took seats with their backs to the house and soon dozed off.

The way was now clear for the escape of Dick and Mr. Bushnell, and the girl hastened up into the attic and explained the situation to them.

"Sarah, you are a trump, indeed!" said Dick. "We will get away from here at once, eh, Mr. Bushnell?"

"Yes, we need stay no longer."

They made their way downstairs, and, after bidding good-bye to the members of the family, they set out.

They reached the East River shore in due time and hunted up a fisherman and hired him to take them across the river.

The man was a rabid Tory, and he kept talking about the blowing up of the sloop-of-war down in the bay by some party or parties unknown, who were supposed to have perished when the submarine boat went down, after having been torn to pieces by a cannon-ball.

Dick and Mr. Bushnell learned all about the affair, and were glad to know that the sloop had been sunk.

"The sentinels on board several of their warships say that they felt jars erg'inst their ships at diffrent times afore their sloop blowed up," the old fisherman explained; "an' they think that their submarine boat wuz thar tryin' ter fasten an infernal masheen ter their bottom uv their ships."

"Well, well!" said Dick; "and what do they think is the reason this was not done?"

"They say they think et wuz becos the copper sheathin' wuz too thick fur their rebels ter bore through, an' they couldn't fasten their infernal masheen on."

"Likely they are right," said Dick, giving Mr. Bushnell a sly glance.

The old fisherman put them ashore at a point six miles up from the north side of the city, and, paying him, they set out in the direction of the patriot encampment.

They arrived there just about sundown, and went at once to headquarters, where they were given a warm welcome by General Washington.

CHAPTER XI.

AN UNWELCOME COMPANION.

General Washington was greatly interested in the report which they made.

"So you blew up a sloop-of-war!" he exclaimed. "That is good!"

"Yes, your excellency," said Mr. Bushnell; "but I wish it might have been one of the large warships."

"So do I; but the destruction of a sloop-of-war is something."

"True, sir; but my boat is ruined. They tore it to pieces with a cannon-ball."

"That is bad; I believe that had this not happened you would have been able to do a lot of damage to the British fleet."

"I think so, sir."

"Well, it can't be helped."

"No, sir; but if you say so I will return to Saybrook and finish up another submarine boat that I have partly constructed. It is something on the order of the one I have lost, only it is larger."

"Go back and finish it up at once, Mr. Bushnell, by all means!"

"Very well, I will do so."

"As for what you accomplished with the other boat, I thank you sincerely, Mr. Bushnell."

"You are welcome, sir. I am a strong patriot, and it gives me pleasure to think that I have been of help to the cause."

They talked a while longer, and then Dick and Mr. Bushnell took their departure.

As soon as they had eaten breakfast, Mr. Bushnell set out for Saybrook. He told Dick that he would be back inside of ten days, and that he would have a better boat than the first one.

"Good!" said Dick; I'll go down into New York Bay in it with you and help you sink another ship or two."

"Very well, Mr. Slater."

Dick told the story of the wonderful adventure in the submarine boat to the Liberty Boys, and they listened with interest.

"Great guns, Dick, but that was a narrow escape!" exclaimed Bob Estabrook, the lieutenant of the company and Dick's righthand man.

"Yes, I thought we were gone when I felt the boat go up in the air when the sloop was blown up."

"I'll wager you thought that, old fellow!"

"Dot muds haf peen awfulness, Tick!" said Carl Gookenspieler.

"Shure an' Oi guiss thot yez hav got it roight wanst, innihow, Cookyspiller," said Patsy Brannigan.

"It must have seemed funny, Dick," said Bob Oddy, the youth who saw fun in everything. "Ha, ha, ha! Ho, ho, ho!"

"Vunny?" said Carl; "vell, uf dot is vunniness, den I don't vos vant any in mine, und dot is so!"

"Oi'm wid yez, dhere, Cookyspiller," said Patsy. "It's mesilf as couldn't injhoy bein' blowed up loike thot, be-gorral!"

"What is to be done next, Dick?" queried Bob.

"I don't know."

"The commander-in-chief didn't give you any instructions, then?"

"No."

"Well, I hope that we will have something to do one of these days."

"I guess we will. The British are not going to stay down there in the city quietly all winter, you may be sure."

"That's so; I don't suppose they will."

"Not they. They'll be up and doing before long."

"I hope that they will."

Bob was one who always wanted to be busy. It galled him terribly to be forced to sit quietly in camp.

Immediately after dinner an orderly came to Dick and told him that he was wanted at headquarters.

Dick went at once.

The commander-in-chief greeted him cordially and then told Dick that he wished him to go back down to the city and try to secure some definite information regarding the intentions of the British.

"Do you think that you can do it?" he queried.

"I'll go at once, sir, and will do my best to secure the information," was Dick's reply.

"Very well, Dick."

The commander-in-chief gave Dick some instructions and then the Liberty Boy took his departure.

"Well?" queried Bob, when Dick got back to his quarters.

"I'm going down to the city, Bob."

"While we have to sit here and do nothing, eh?"

"I guess that is about the truth of the matter, Bob."

Bob gave utterance to a groan and the other Liberty Boys laughed.

"Oh, don't take it so hard, Bob," said Mark Morrison.

"We'll get into action before long."

"I am afraid not."

Dick had on a suit of citizen's clothing, and so was all ready for the work before him.

He set out about four o'clock and made his way on foot slowly toward the south.

Dick was in no hurry, as he would be able to get to his destination before dark, anyway.

He did not wish to do this, however; it was his purpose to take it easy and wait till after nightfall before entering the city, as he would then be able to slip past the sentinels.

When Dick had gone perhaps two miles a man stepped out from among the trees at the roadside, and, nodding to Dick, said:

"Good-afternoon."

"Good-afternoon," replied Dick.

He eyed the man keenly without appearing to do so.

"I wonder who he is and whether he is a patriot or Tory," was the Liberty Boy's thought.

"Where are you bound for, young man, if it is a fair question?" the man asked.

"Nowhere in particular," was the reply. "I'm just walking out for exercise; I enjoy walking."

"That's odd; so do I."

Then they walked along together.

"We might as well know each other's name, since we are companions for the time being," said the man. "My name is Sanford; what's yours?"

"Sparks."

"Very good, Mr. Sparks. This is a lovely afternoon, isn't it?"

"Yes, indeed."

"Do you live in these parts, Mr. Sparks?"

"I live up across the Harlem River, sir."

"Ah, indeed? Then perhaps you have been over in the patriot encampment?"

Dick shook his head.

"No," he said.

"No? Why didn't you visit the encampment?"

"I tried to, but they wouldn't let me in."

"Oh, they wouldn't, eh?"

"No."

"I wonder why?"

"I don't know."

"Thought you were a spy probably?" The man shot a keen glance at Dick as he said this.

"Maybe," said Dick.

"But you are not a spy?"

Dick shook his head.

"Oh, no."

"Not a rebel spy, eh?"

"No, sir."

"Perhaps you are a British spy?"

Again Dick shook his head.

"I am not a spy at all, sir," he said.

The man laughed, and the intonation of his voice and air indicated that he was skeptical.

"Oh, come, now, don't be afraid to speak out to me," he said; "I am neutral—am for neither side, you know—and so I don't care if you are a rebel spy or a British spy. It would not matter to me, and I would not say a word about it to any one."

But Dick was suspicious. The man was asking altogether too many questions. The Liberty Boy was naturally cautious, and would not have given the stranger any hint of his real business, anyway, but now he was rendered doubly cautious.

"I have nothing to tell you," Dick said quietly. "I had a sort of curiosity to see an army, and so thought I would go to the patriot encampment, but they wouldn't let me in, and so I am walking down toward the city. Maybe I will enter the city and maybe I won't. I haven't decided yet."

"Oh, you might as well," said Sanford. "I'm going in, and you can go right along with me."

This, of course, would not suit Dick. He did not wish to enter the city in broad daylight, for there might be some one among the soldiers who would recognize him. He did not say so then, but he decided that he would part company with this man and enter the city alone after dark.

The man kept up a lively conversation, and every once in a while he would ask a question that was calculated to draw Dick out.

But the Liberty Boy was a shrewd one, and was not to be caught thus. He was a pretty good actor, and his companion never suspected that the young fellow was suspicious of him and on his guard.

When they were about a mile from the north end of the city Dick paused, put on an irresolute air and said:

"I don't believe that I'll go down into the city, Mr. Sanford."

"Why not?" Dick fancied there was a tone of disappointment in the man's voice.

"Oh, I don't know; I just think I had better not, that's all. If I should go I would be way in the night getting back home, and my folks would be uneasy about me."

"Oh, pshaw, no they wouldn't be. Come along, Sparks."

But Dick shook his head.

"No, I guess I'll go back," he said.

Then suddenly Mr. Sanford showed the cloven foot. He whipped out a pistol, leveled it at Dick, and cried:

"I guess you won't go back! You'll go down into the city with me, for I am convinced that you are a rebel spy!"

CHAPTER XII.

DICK GETS THE BETTER OF THE BRITISH SPY.

Dick was not greatly surprised.

He had more than half expected some such action on the other's part.

But now, the better to deceive the man and make sure

of getting the better of him, Dick pretended to be surprised and alarmed as well.

"Don't shoot!" he cried. "Say, Mr. Sanford, what do you mean, anyway? Point that pistol in some other direction; it might go off!"

"It certainly will go off," grimly, "unless you consent to accompany me down into the city."

"But I don't want to go."

"That has nothing to do with it. I want you to go, and go you must!"

Dick saw that there would be no use of trying to argue the man out of his determination, and made up his mind to act at once.

With Dick, to decide was to act, and he did so immediately.

He leaped forward, and, knocking the muzzle of the pistol upward, grasped the man by the throat.

The man was taken greatly by surprise; he had not expected that the youth would dare try to get the better of him.

He fought desperately, however, and doubtless imagined that he could overpower his young opponent.

Around and around they moved, struggling fiercely. The man had dropped the pistol and was using both hands.

Dick was an extraordinarily strong youth, and was more than a match for the man.

He suddenly used a trick that he had learned, and threw his opponent hard.

Down the fellow went with a thud.

Dick fell upon Sanford, adding to the fall, and nearly all the breath was knocked out of him.

The man still continued to struggle, but to no avail. Dick held him in spite of all he could do.

"It's no use, Mr. Sanford," said the Liberty Boy quietly; "I have you in my power."

"So it seems," was the reply; "but it will be a dear piece of work for you, young man!"

"That remains to be seen."

"You will be captured and taken before the British commander-in-chief, and then you will be shot as a spy."

"I'll risk it."

The man made a sudden, desperate effort to throw Dick off and get free.

He was unsuccessful, for Dick was on his guard and defeated the fellow's purpose.

Realizing that he could do nothing, the man ceased struggling and panted:

"What are you going to do with me?"

"I'm going to take you prisoner."

"What! What can you do with me?"

"I can do the same thing with you that you were intending to do with me."

"You mean—"

"That I will take you up to the patriot encampment and turn you over to the officers there."

"You won't do that! You don't mean it!"

"Yes, I do."

Then Dick went to work and bound the man's arms with a couple of handkerchiefs knotted together. Sanford struggled, but it was no use; he could not prevent Dick from accomplishing his purpose.

Dick now leaped to his feet and stood looking down at the man and smiling pleasantly.

"You got beaten at your own game that time, Mr. Sanford," he said.

The man glared.

"You think you are smart, don't you!" he hissed.

"No," said Dick; "but you thought you were smart, I judge, when you started in to make a prisoner of me."

"Bah!"

Dick glanced up and then down the road.

No one was in sight, but some one might happen along at any moment.

Dick took hold of the man's arm.

"Get up!" he commanded.

The prisoner obeyed.

"Well, what's next?" he asked.

"Come along into the timber, where we will not be so likely to be seen."

The man walked along beside Dick. He evidently realized that it would be useless to refuse to do so.

When they were perhaps fifty yards from the road, they came to a stop.

Dick looked at the prisoner thoughtfully.

"I am not quite ready to go back to the patriot encampment," he murmured; "and the question is, What shall I do with you till I am ready."

Sanford looked at Dick quietly and searchingly.

"What are you going to do?" he queried.

"I guess that I will go down into the city, after all."

The man nodded.

"I thought so!" he said. "You are a rebel spy!"

"You are at liberty to think what you please," said Dick, with a smile. "Of course, I shall not admit that what you say is true."

"But it is true, just the same!"

"Your saying so does not make it so."

"Bosh! You are a rebel spy, and I will yet have the satisfaction of handing you over to General Howe, and seeing you shot!"

Dick shook his head and said laughingly:

"I don't think you will, Mr. Sanford."

"Yes, he will, young fellow! We'll see to that!"

These words were uttered by the leader of a party of five redcoats who came bounding out from behind trees.

They threw themselves upon Dick, evidently bent on bearing him to the earth and making him a prisoner.

But the Liberty Boy was a terrible fellow in a hand-to-hand fight, and he gave the five redcoats a reception such as they would not have believed possible.

He knocked two down quick as a flash, and then was borne to the ground by the other three; but he managed to wriggle out from underneath his opponents.

He was on his feet before they were, and as the other two had not yet risen—they were still busy counting stars—Dick whirled and dashed away through the timber.

"Up and after him!" yelled Sanford excitedly; "don't let him get away!"

The leader of the party of five scrambled to his feet, at the same time drawing a pistol.

"Stop!" he yelled; "stop, or I will put a bullet through you!"

But Dick paid no attention to the command.

He darted this way and that, making himself as hard a target to hit as was possible.

The redcoat leveled his pistol, took aim as best he could, and then pulled the trigger.

Crack!

Down went the Liberty Boy upon his face.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE LIBERTY BOYS WANT SOMETHING TO DO.

Wild yells went up from the man who had fired and from Sanford.

"You got him! You hit him!" the latter cried.

The other redcoats were scrambling up now, and they gave utterance to cries of delight.

"I'm glad you dropped him!"

"Served him right!"

"I hope you killed him!"

"So do I!"

Such were their exclamations, and then all ran toward where Dick lay.

They had taken only a few steps, however, when suddenly the fugitive leaped to his feet and bounded away at a fast pace.

The redcoats stopped and stared in amazement.

They were so surprised that for a few moments they were incapable of making a move.

Sanford was himself before any of the others regained control of their faculties.

"After him!" Sanford cried. "Don't let him get away!"

The redcoats leaped forward and hastened after the fleeing youth, but they were no match for him in speed, and gradually lost ground.

They kept up the pursuit a quarter of a mile or more, however, and then stopped and turned back.

"We couldn't catch that fellow in a week," growled the leader.

"No," from another; "he runs like a deer."

They made their way back to where Sanford stood, and after freeing his hands, asked him how he came to be a prisoner in the young fellow's hands.

Sanford explained and gave it as his belief that the young man who had just made his escape was a rebel spy.

"Perhaps he was that famous spy, Dick Slater!" he said. "He certainly knows how to fight, anyhow!" growled one of the two who had been knocked down.

Dick had not been hit by the bullet when he went down, as detailed. He had caught his toe under a vine and had fallen headlong, but the fall probably saved his life, for he heard the bullet whistle past his ear as he went down.

As soon as he was sure that the redcoats had given up the pursuit, he paused.

He listened intently and could hear no sound of pursuit. "I guess I have shaken them off," he murmured.

Then the question of what he should do came up for settlement.

He decided to conceal himself somewhere in the vicinity and wait till dark before trying to enter the city.

He did this, and about an hour after nightfall he slipped past the sentinel stationed at the end of one of the streets and entered the city.

He put in several hours trying to secure information, and, failing, he went to a tavern on a side street, and got a room and went to bed.

He was in the city all the next day, and while he did not learn anything of very great importance, he found out that no move was intended by the British commander-in-chief—at least, not for a couple of weeks.

This he deemed of sufficient importance so that it should be conveyed to General Washington, and that night he slipped past the sentinel and out of the city and set out northward toward the patriot encampment.

He reached there two hours later and went to the Liberty Boys' quarters and lay down and went to sleep.

He was up bright and early next morning, and the youths were eager to hear what he had done down in the city.

"I'll tell you boys the story of my trip after I have been to headquarters and reported," Dick said.

As soon as he had eaten breakfast, he set out and was soon in the presence of the commander-in-chief.

He made his report, and General Washington was glad to know that the British were not going to make a move soon.

"It will give me time to decide on our own future movements," he said.

Presently Dick saluted and withdrew and returned to the Liberty Boys' quarters.

He told them the story of his adventures while away, and they discussed his encounter with the man Sanford, and Bob said he wished that he had been there to help Dick when the five redcoats made the attack on him.

"You wouldn't have had to run then, old fellow!" he said grimly.

"No, I guess that I wouldn't have had to do so," smiled Dick.

They talked quite a while, and then Bob said:

"Say, Dick, will we have to stay here two weeks waiting to see what the redcoats are going to do?"

"I guess so, Bob."

"Sit around doing nothing, eh?"

"Well, there isn't much that we can do, I judge."

"Say, Dick!" eagerly.

"Well?"

"I've got a scheme!"

"Let's hear what it is."

"All right. It is, this: Let's us Liberty Boys go down into New York Bay and capture a British ship!"

The youths stared at Bob in amazement.

The young Continentals were all brave to recklessness, but the idea of going down into New York Bay and capturing the warship seemed to them to be the height of recklessness.

"That would be a desperate project, Bob," said Dick.

"Bah! Who cares?"

Dick laughed.

"I know that you don't care," he said. "The more desperate it is, the better you like it."

"So do you all, Dick."

This was so nearly the truth that the young Continentals did not deny it.

"But the most of us want some chance to escape in case things go wrong," said Dick.

"Oh, well, we can get away if we have to swim for it."

Bob was optimistic in temperament.

Dick looked inquiringly at the others.

"What do you say, boys?" he queried.

"Well, you have already done some good work down in New York Bay, Dick—in that sub-marine boat with Mr. Bushnell—and we would like to do some work down there, too, if we can."

"Yes, yes!" in chorus from a number.

There was an eager look on the faces of all, and Dick smiled and said:

"I can see that you are all about as eager to go as is the case with Bob."

"That's the truth, Dick," chuckled Bob. "I haven't any monopoly on recklessness and daring."

The young patriots talked the matter over at some length, and it was decided to go down into New York Bay and try to capture a British warship if the commander-in-chief would grant them permission to do so.

Dick went to headquarters and laid the matter before General Washington.

The great man pondered a few minutes, and then told Dick that they might go ahead and see what they could do.

"But be very careful," he cautioned; "don't let the boys give way to a feeling of recklessness and take too great risks."

"I will watch them closely, your excellency, and do my best to hold them in check."

"Very well."

Dick hastened back and informed the Liberty Boys of the commander-in-chief's decision.

They were delighted.

"Hurrah!" cried Bob.

"Hooray!" from Carl Gookenspieler. "Ve vill gabdure ein Pritish varsheep, und dot is so!"

"Phwat koind av a sheep are yez goin' to capture, Cooky-spiller?" asked Patsy Brannigan.

"Ein varsheep, Batsy."

"Ha, ha, ha! Ho, ho, ho!" roared Bob Oddy, who saw fun in everything.

Carl glared at the odd youth wrathfully.

"Dot veller vos mage me half sicgnesses der sdomach in mit his haw-hawin' und ho-hoin'!" he growled.

This made all the young patriots laugh, and Carl was more incensed than ever. He did not say anything, however, but contented himself with looking daggers at Bob Oddy, who had another fit of laughing.

Presently quiet was restored, and the Liberty Boys discussed their plans for making the trip down to the bay and capturing, or trying to capture, a British warship.

It was a big undertaking, but this thought did not daunt them in the least.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE CAPTURE OF THE SCHOONER.

It was decided that the majority of the Liberty Boys should walk down along the shore of the river till within half a mile of the edge of New York City, where they would stop and stay till their comrades who were going in a boat returned from undertaking to capture the warship.

There was only one boat available for the Liberty Boys, and it would carry six persons comfortably, but no more.

When night came they set out.

Dick, Bob and four more of the youths went in the boat.

They realized that they were starting upon a dangerous and desperate enterprise.

They had no difficulty in getting down into the bay, and here they began figuring on attacking the sentinels on board a schooner which was anchored at a goodly distance from the nearest warship.

The youths rowed softly, the oars being muffled with cloths wrapped around them, and they succeeded in getting alongside the schooner without being discovered.

The schooner sat low in the water, and Dick, by standing erect, was able to catch hold of the rail.

A sentinel was pacing back and forth near by, his footsteps sounding loudly, but this fact had no deterring effect on the young Continentals.

Dick climbed over the rail and seized the redcoat by the throat.

The fellow managed to utter a startled cry, however, and two more redcoats came rushing out of the cabin.

The other Liberty Boys followed Dick quickly, however, and a lively fight was instantly in progress.

It seemed that the soldiers and sailors, with the exception of the three sentinels, were away from the vessel, and it did not take the Liberty Boys long to overpower the three and bind and gag them.

"Now to work, boys!" exclaimed Dick. "Slip the cable and get up some sails. The wind is in our favor, and we can run up the river at a good speed."

The youths who had accompanied Dick and Bob had been selected because they understood the handling of sails, and they were up in the rigging quickly with the nimbleness of cats, and soon had enough sail set so that the schooner could be gotten under way.

Dick was at the wheel, and soon had the vessel plowing along up the river.

The capture of the schooner had just now been discovered, evidently, for alarm guns were being fired, and lights were showing on all the warships.

"They won't catch us, though," said Dick grimly.

"No; we will get away, all right, Dick," said Bob.

When the schooner came opposite the point where the Liberty Boys were concealed on the shore, Dick fired two pistol-shots, which told the Liberty Boys that the affair had been successful, and that they were to hasten back up to the encampment as rapidly as possible.

It would have taken too long for the youths to come aboard, and the British ships would soon be coming in pursuit, doubtless.

The moon, which had been behind clouds, came out suddenly and the British on the warships in the bay must have caught sight of the schooner at once, for two of the vessels slipped their cables and got up sail and came up the river in pursuit.

The gunners on board those two vessels opened fire presently, and the cannon-balls began dropping all around and in dangerous proximity to the schooner.

There was a pivot-gun on the schooner's deck, and Dick ordered the boys to man it and return the fire.

"We'll show them that they are not to have it all their own way!" he said grimly.

Bob and the other youths went to work.

They found ammunition, loaded the gun, and then Bob sighted it. A few moments later there was a report, and a cannon-ball went tearing through the rigging on one of the pursuing warships.

"Hurrah!" shouted Bob; "we did some damage that time!"

They hastily reloaded the cannon, and again it was discharged, but this time without effect.

The British gunners kept at work, and soon there was plenty of music in the air.

A number of cannon-balls came close to the schooner, and indeed one knocked a piece of the rail off, but no serious damage was done.

The Liberty Boys, on the other hand, succeeded in sending four cannon-balls through the rigging of the two warships.

The chase was continued to within a mile of the patriot encampment, and then the British warships gave up and turned back. Doubtless their commanders feared to come any closer to the enemy's encampment.

The Liberty Boys ran the schooner on up the river to a little bay half a mile north, and here they put in and tied the schooner up to a tree with a long rope.

Then they went ashore and made their way down to the encampment.

The other members of the company did not get in till about one o'clock.

All lay down and slept soundly till morning, and while eating breakfast the six boys who had effected the capture of the schooner told the others how it had been accomplished.

The Liberty Boys were loud in their praise of their six comrades' good work, but expressed themselves as being sorry that they had been unable to render any assistance.

"Well, we didn't need any help," said Dick.

Breakfast over, he went to headquarters and made his report to the commander-in-chief.

General Washington was delighted, and in company with Colonel Hamilton, he went with Dick down to where the schooner lay.

They went aboard and looked the vessel over.

"We can use this schooner," said General Washington.

"Yes, your excellency," agreed Hamilton.

When they had finished their survey of the vessel, they went ashore and returned to the encampment.

A party of half a dozen soldiers was sent to the schooner,

and the three British prisoners were brought and placed in the guardhouse.

The news that the Liberty Boys had captured a British schooner was soon in every one's possession, and the soldiers discussed the matter and told one another that it took the Liberty Boys to do difficult and dangerous work.

The young Continentals themselves were well satisfied with what they had accomplished.

And when those who had not had an immediate hand in the affair were bewailing this, Dick told them not to do so; that they did their part and were entitled to as much of the credit as those who had gone down into the bay and made the actual capture.

"Say, let's do the same thing again to-night, Dick!" said Bob Estabrook eagerly.

"Yah, led us dooded der same vay vonce more, Tick!" from Carl Gookenspieler.

"Yes, yes!" in chorus from the boys.

Dick looked thoughtfully at the ground.

"They will be on their guard to-night," he said presently.

"Oh, well, who cares?" laughed Bob. "It will make the affair more interesting, that is all."

"It might make it too interesting, old fellow," with a smile.

"Oh, we'll risk that."

"I'll think it over," said Dick.

"We don't care how much you think it over, just so you decide to go down and make another capture, Dick," chuckled Bob.

The other boys all gave utterance to remarks of similar character.

Dick would not promise just then, but said he would let them know before evening.

He went to General Washington and laid the matter before him, and the commander-in-chief told him not to go.

"They will be on their guard, and the chances are that you would all be captured," he said.

"How about to-morrow night, or the night after, sir?"

"That would not be so bad; but I think it will be better to wait three or four nights before making another attempt."

"Very well; we will do so, your excellency."

So Dick went back and told the boys that they would not go that night, but would wait three or four nights.

The young patriots were disappointed, but they could not but see that it was best to wait a while and not be too reckless.

"But we'll go again," said Bob, "and we'll capture another British ship, too, or know the reason why!"

CHAPTER XV.

DICK ENCOUNTERS A COUPLE OF OLD ENEMIES.

Three nights later the Liberty Boys again went down to New York Bay, bent on capturing another British vessel.

They employed the same tactics as on the former occasion, but found that the vessels were all too closely guarded.

It was impossible to make a success of an attempt to capture one of the ships.

Dick was brave to rashness, but he was cautious and careful, too, and he was not willing to take such desperate chances.

The boys spent four or five hours maneuvering, trying to get a good chance at a vessel, but did not see any opening, all the ships being guarded by at least half a dozen marines, while lanterns hung along the rail at regular intervals, making it an extremely hazardous proceeding to venture near.

Disappointed, the young Continentals finally rowed back up the river.

They put in at the point where the other boys were in waiting, and Dick explained matters and told them to return to the encampment at once.

They set out, and those in the boat pushed off, and all reached the encampment at about the same time.

Next morning Dick went to headquarters and reported to General Washington, who said that he was not surprised.

"I did not think you could succeed a second time," he declared.

"It would be necessary to have a sub-marine boat to get

close to one of those ships at night now," said Dick. "Lanterns are hung to the rails at regular intervals, and this makes it light all around the ships."

"Perhaps Mr. Bushnell may get back with his other submarine boat before the British leave New York Bay," said the commander-in-chief.

"Perhaps so; I hope so," said Dick.

"By going provided with proper tools for penetrating the copper sheathing on the hulls of the warship, it would be possible to do a good deal of damage, I have no doubt," said the general.

"Do you look for Mr. Bushnell back here soon, sir?"

"I hope to see him before another week passes. He said he would put all his men to work on the sub-marine boat, and that they would finish it up as quickly as possible."

"I hope he will get here. I want to make another trip down into New York Bay in a sub-marine boat."

"He will be glad to have you, for you understand what is to be done better than any one else would."

"That is true, sir."

Next day the commander-in-chief summoned Dick again and sent him down to New York City to do some more spy work.

"I am afraid that the British may be on the point of making some kind of a move, and if such is the case I must know it," he said.

Dick said that he would do his best.

He was in the city all night and all next day. Along toward evening Dick was over on the wharf by the East River, and suddenly he found himself confronted by Bud Buggston, the burly young bully with whom he had had an encounter once before.

The young tough recognized Dick, and gave utterance to a bellow of rage and delight commingled.

"I've be'n lookin' an' lookin' fur ye!" he cried.

"Have you?" said Dick quietly.

"Yas! Ther las' time I seen ye ye hed ther bes' uv ther argyment atween us, but now I'm goin' ter squar' up things with ye, see?"

"Better let things rest as they are," warned Dick.

"Not much! No, sir-ree! I kin lick ye, I know, an' this heer time I'm goin' ter do et!"

With these words he leaped forward and made a fierce attack on the Liberty Boy.

Dick gave way before the other for a few minutes, and then presently he began returning blow for blow.

He got Buggston started backward in his turn, and when the tough was within four feet of the edge of the wharf Dick gave him a terrible blow fair in the chest and sent him flying down into the water.

"There! Now I guess you will be satisfied!" murmured Dick, and, turning, he walked away, followed by the wondering looks of the 'longshoremen, who were amazed to see Bud get handled so roughly by one who did not look to be nearly so heavy or strong.

"I hope that I won't run into anybody else that knows me," thought Dick.

Scarcely had this thought passed through Dick's mind when he ran plump into a party of four redcoats, one of whom was Migsby, the bully that he had had the fight with on shipboard, and whom he had thrown through the port-hole.

Migsby recognized Dick instantly.

He had been drinking, too, and was in an ugly humor.

He gave utterance to a roar of rage and leaped at Dick.

His three companions stepped out of the way and looked on in open-mouthed amazement.

Dick, though taken by surprise, fought back at such a lively rate that the burly bully had all he could do right from the first. And as the affair progressed, Migsby grew weary, while Dick was as fresh as ever.

Quite a crowd had collected, and they were about evenly divided in their sympathies for the contending parties.

Some cheered the redcoat and encouraged him, while others did the same thing with Dick.

Very few imagined, when the affair first began, that the youth would prove to be a match for the burly redcoat; but they saw later on that there was a chance that he would.

"It isn't such an uneven affair as I thought," remarked one, after Dick had dealt Migsby a couple of severe blows, causing him to stagger back.

"That young chap is a good fighter, even though he is only a boy," said another.

"So he is," from a third.

"But he's too light; the big soldier will thrash him," declared another.

But just then Dick gave Migsby a terrible blow full in the chest and knocked him flat upon his back in the gutter, where he lay for a few moments blinking up at the sky.

"He's counting the stars," chuckled one citizen who had favored Dick in the affair.

"I'll wager that he sees more than he ever saw in the daytime before!" declared another.

"You had better get away while you have the chance, young fellow," advised a man. "He will just about kill you when he gets on his feet again."

"I'll risk it," smiled Dick.

"Why did he attack you?" queried another.

Dick shook his head, but made no reply.

Migsby had just risen to a sitting posture, and now he gazed stupidly around him.

"What hit me?" he asked.

"That young fellow's fist," said a man, nodding toward Dick.

This brought it all back to Migsby's mind, and he hastily scrambled to his feet.

"I'll kill you, blast you!" he shouted.

Then something flashed in his hand, and all saw it was a sheath-knife, which he had drawn and opened while getting to his feet.

"Look out!" yelled several spectators in chorus.

Dick saw that the man had a knife in his hand, and he, well knew that the redcoat was capable of using the weapon.

CHAPTER XVI.

MR. BUSHNELL APPEARS AGAIN.

The crowd was gathered around so closely that it would have been an impossibility to get out of the infuriated redcoat's way, and so Dick put into play a feat which he had performed on a few occasions where it was absolutely necessary in order to save his life.

He suddenly leaped into the air—he was a splendid natural athlete—kicked out and struck the redcoat in the chest, hurling him backward with terrible force, causing him to drop the knife and fall gasping and moaning to the ground.

Dick dropped back and alighted on his feet, light as a cat.

It was a wonderful feat, and the spectators gaped in wonder. They had never seen anything like it before.

"Ah-h-h-h-h!"

"Did you ever!"

"Never saw anything like it!"

"Beats anything I ever saw!"

"Wonderful! Wonderful!"

Dick looked at the writhing form of the redcoat, and then at the crowd.

"He won't be able to fight any more at present," he said, "so please let me pass. I have business to attend to and have no time to lose."

The crowd parted at once.

"You can go, young fellow, so far as we are concerned," said one.

"I guess you're right about him having enough," from another, with a nod toward Migsby.

The comrades of Migsby did not offer to molest Dick. Evidently they felt that it had been a fair fight, at least on the part of the young stranger, and did not feel called upon to take any hand in it.

So Dick passed through the crowd, with a nod to the right and to the left, and on up the street.

He was in something of a hurry to get away, for he feared that some one might see him who knew him to be Dick Slater, the patriot spy. A goodly number of redcoats were familiar enough with his looks to recognize him.

He was successful in escaping detection, however, and was soon walking up Broadway in such a crowd that he was not likely to be noticed at all.

He remained in the city till after dark, and then slipped out and past the sentinels and headed northward toward Harlem Heights.

He was in the patriot encampment two hours later, and as it was not yet late, he went to headquarters and made his report to the commander-in-chief.

He had not learned a great deal, but he had heard enough so that he felt certain there was no intention on the part of the British of moving out of the city soon.

General Washington was glad to secure this much information, as he could rest easy a while longer, at any rate.

"I hope that Mr. Bushnell will get his sub-marine boat finished and get here with it in time to go down into the bay and destroy one or two British warships," the commander-in-chief said, just before Dick took his departure.

"I hope the same, your excellency," said Dick. "I am eager to go down there with him, and somehow I believe that next time we shall be more successful."

"You did very well the other time, Dick; the trouble was that the boat was destroyed, and you both came near losing your lives. Next time he will be more careful and will see to it that he is given sufficient time in which to get away from the vicinity of the ship before the machine is exploded."

"True, sir; that was where the trouble came in the other time."

"It was a very dangerous position you were placed in, my boy."

"Yes, sir; and I would not like to be placed in another such."

"I should judge that such is the case."

A little later Dick withdrew and returned to the Liberty Boys' quarters. He lay down, the other boys being already asleep, and was soon sleeping soundly.

About ten o'clock next day an orderly came and told Dick that he was wanted at headquarters.

He went at once.

To his surprise, he found Mr. Bushnell there, and the look of eagerness and excitement on his face and on that of the commander-in-chief as well, apprised Dick that the new sub-marine boat was completed.

"You have got it done?" he cried.

"Yes," said Mr. Bushnell.

"Good!"

"The boat is down at the East River shore," said General Washington.

"Did you come from Saybrook in the boat?" queried Dick.

"Yes."

"How does it work?"

"Fine."

"That is good. I'm eager to see it!"

"We will go over and take a look at it right away," said General Washington. "I have sent for Colonel Hamilton, and—ah, here he is now!"

The colonel entered at that moment and exchanged greetings with the three.

He was delighted when told that another sub-marine boat had been constructed—or, finished, rather—and as all were eager to see the boat, they set out at once.

They were not long in reaching their destination, and when they saw the new craft they were delighted.

This "Marine Turtle," as its inventor called it, was larger than the other had been, and was better built, and the machinery was more perfect in every way.

"It will enable us to destroy one or two of the British warships, I am certain," said Mr. Bushnell, his eyes shining with patriotic enthusiasm.

"When shall we make the attempt, your excellency?" queried Dick eagerly.

"I leave that to you two," was the reply. "Do it just as soon as you see fit—just as soon as you are ready."

"We are ready now," said Mr. Bushnell.

"Then we will go down into New York Bay to-night!" breathed Dick.

Mr. Bushnell nodded.

"The sooner we go, the better I will like it," he said.

They talked there half an hour or so, and then General Washington and Colonel Hamilton returned to headquarters, leaving Mr. Bushnell and Dick to make preparations for their dangerous and difficult work of the night.

They entered the boat and Mr. Bushnell made a trip out into the river and up it half a mile and back again.

Everything worked perfectly, and Dick remarked that this boat was a faster one than the other had been.

"Yes, half again faster, at least," agreed Mr. Bushnell.

They made a landing, and then examined the boat thoroughly, testing the various parts, and at last they desisted, feeling satisfied that all was as it should be.

"If we fail this time, it will not be because of any defect in this boat," said the inventor.

"You are right," agreed Dick. "But we must be sure to bring over a brace and bit that will enable us to penetrate the copper sheathing on the hulls of the warships."

"You are right; that is a very important thing, Mr. Slater."

They now returned to the encampment, and Dick told the boys that he was going down to the bay that night with Mr. Bushnell, and that they were going to try to destroy one or more of the warships.

"Say, Dick, let me go along!" cried Bob eagerly.

Dick hesitated.

"I would be willing, Bob," he said; "but I don't know whether Mr. Bushnell would or not."

"There's room for me in this new boat, isn't there, Dick?"

"Yes, there's room."

"Then I'm going to ask Mr. Bushnell to let me go."

"All right; ask him."

"Come along with me, and maybe you can put in a word or two that will be to my advantage, old fellow."

"All right."

They hunted Mr. Bushnell up, and he consented to let Bob accompany them.

Bob was wild with delight.

"Hurrah!" he cried. "We'll blow some of those British warships into the middle of next week!"

"Yah, bud you vos vant to loog ouid dot you don'd vos ged plowed der mittle uf nexd veek into at der same dime, Pob!" said Carl Gookenspieler.

"Shure, an' Dootchy has said somethin' smart fur wanst in his loife, begorra!" grinned Patsy Brannigan.

CHAPTER XVII.

A WARSHIP DESTROYED.

Just as night was coming on, Dick, Bob and Mr. Bushnell left the encampment and went over to the East River and got into the sub-marine boat and set out down the stream.

They did not make very good time, as there was no hurry. Indeed, they did not wish to get to the scene of their intended operations until it was as dark as it would be that night.

On down they went, and at last they emerged from the East River into the bay.

It was easy to see the location of the various warships, as the lanterns hanging along the rail showed them up quite distinctly.

Mr. Bushnell kept the boat on the surface until they had decided which ship to approach, and then he submerged the boat and they moved slowly along under the water.

Closer and closer they drew to the warship, and at last they rested close under the overhanging stern.

Here the boat was brought to the best position for their purpose, and the sliding-door was opened and the work of penetrating the copper sheathing on the hull was begun.

They had a good brace and bit, and made very fair progress.

It took them two hours, however, to bore the four holes and affix the infernal machine to the hull.

When this had been accomplished Mr. Bushnell set the clockwork going, and then the sliding-door was closed and the boat sank beneath the surface and moved slowly away.

Mr. Bushnell guided the boat to a point well over toward the mouth of the Hudson River, and then he brought it to the surface, and also to a stop.

He slid the door back and the three looked out and kept their eyes on the ship to which the "infernal machine" had been fixed.

They waited patiently, and at last there sounded a terrible explosion.

It was as though a dozen cannon had been discharged simultaneously.

The next moment flames leaped up, and it was seen that the wrecked hull of the warship was on fire.

The three were quite a distance from the scene, but they could hear the screams from the injured and the yells for help from those who had not been hurt.

There was great excitement on the other ships, the three knew, as they could hear the hoarse voices giving commands, and soon they saw boats rowing hastily toward the scene of the explosion and conflagration.

It was decided by the three that it would be useless to try to blow up another warship that night, as too close a watch would be kept, so the boat was headed up the Hudson, and they kept on till they reached the patriot encampment.

Here they made a landing, and Dick and Bob bade Mr. Bushnell good-night and went to their quarters. He wished to remain in his boat.

Next morning Mr. Bushnell came up to the encampment and ate breakfast with Dick and Bob; then he and Dick went to headquarters and made their report.

General Washington was delighted.

"You did well," he said; "I suppose that you will try again to-night?"

"Yes, indeed!" from Mr. Bushnell.

And they did.

They went down into the bay and tried it again, but the first ship they reached had so many guards stationed along the rail that it was dangerous for the three to try to do any work there.

It was the same at all the ships they visited, and at last they had to give up in despair.

They were greatly disappointed, but were determined to keep on trying every night until they did succeed in blowing up another ship.

The next night they tried it again, and this time they were not only no more successful than the night before, but they were seen by a sentinel, who gave the alarm.

Immediately there was a commotion on the deck of each and every one of the ships, and boats were lowered and soldiers and sailors dropped into the boats, and soon the bay was alive.

"Say, they're trying to find us!" said Bob.

Mr. Bushnell had submerged the boat at once, and they were now moving slowly along.

Suddenly there was a grating sound, followed by a bump, and the boat came to a stop.

"Hello, what's the trouble?" exclaimed Bob.

"I guess I ran against a rock in the bottom of the bay," replied Mr. Bushnell.

"That's it, likely," from Dick.

"I'll back up and get away from the rock, and then we will be all right," the inventor said.

But when he tried to do this he found that he could not accomplish it.

The boat did not budge an inch.

The three looked at one another blankly—they had a candle burning.

This was indeed an unpleasant situation.

They did not wish to lose the boat, and this would be the result if they were to open the door and climb out and rise to the surface. The boat would stay where it was probably forever, as they would have no way of raising it.

But it seemed that they could do nothing where they were, so the only thing left for them to do was to leave the boat.

They discussed the situation some time, and then Mr. Bushnell said he would make another attempt to get the boat to the surface.

He did so, only to fail, as before.

"I guess I'll have to give it up," he said presently, with a sigh.

"It looks that way," agreed Dick.

"Yes," from Bob. "I guess we might as well open the door and climb through and get to the surface and then ashore as quickly as possible."

"True," from Mr. Bushnell; "our supply of air is becoming exhausted, and we will have to get out."

They talked the matter over a few moments, and decided as to the order in which they were to leave the boat, as the water would come rushing in the instant the door was opened, and it would be a difficult matter to get out.

They decided that Mr. Bushnell should go first, and then Bob, Dick being last.

When they had made their arrangements, Mr. Bushnell unfastened the door and opened it as quickly as possible.

The water came rushing in at a great rate, but Mr. Bushnell quickly climbed up through the opening. Bob followed, and then came Dick.

They rose to the surface and drew in fresh breaths and struck out for the shore.

It was hard work swimming with their clothing on, but they were good swimmers and succeeded in getting to the shore.

Here they paused a few minutes to rest, after which they set out in the direction of the patriot encampment.

They arrived there shortly after midnight and went to the Liberty Boys' quarters and lay down and were soon asleep.

CHAPTER XVIII.

DICK SECURES IMPORTANT INFORMATION.

"We have lost the sub-marine boat, your excellency."
"That is too bad! But how did it happen?"

Mr. Bushnell and Dick were at headquarters, and it was the former who had spoken to the commander-in-chief as given above.

Mr. Bushnell explained how they had come to lose the boat, and General Washington listened intently.

"Well, you succeeded in destroying one warship with it," he said, when the other had finished, "and that helps some."

"True, sir; but I wanted to do much more."

"I was in hopes that you would be able to do much more, but you did the best you could."

"True, sir. Well, as I have nothing more that I can do here, I guess that I will return to Saybrook."

Then he bade the commander-in-chief good-by and, in company with Dick, withdrew.

He took his departure, and Dick and Bob put in the morning telling the other boys the story of their adventures in the sub-marine boat.

That afternoon Dick was summoned to headquarters, and the commander-in-chief told the Liberty Boy that there was more work for him to do.

"I want that you shall make another trip to New York City," the general said; "and if you can do so, learn definitely what the plans of General Howe are."

"I will do my best, sir."

Dick listened to the instructions given him, and then went back to his quarters.

That evening he set out, and as he had done before, he walked.

A little more than two hours later he was walking down Broadway, in the city.

He made his way around in the direction of the headquarters building.

He stood across the street and looked at the building a few minutes, and while he stood there he saw several officers enter.

"I'll wager anything that they are going to hold a council!" was Dick's thought.

He made his way around to the rear of the building and began trying to find a way to get in.

He tried the door and the windows, but they were fastened good and tight.

Dick searched around for something with which to pry a window open, but was not successful.

He lost so much time at this that he decided that it would not do him much good, if any, to get in, and so he made his way back around to the front of the building.

He was there perhaps half an hour, and then he heard the front door open.

A moment later he heard the sound of feet trampling on the floor of the stoop above his head.

"There they come!" was his thought.

He listened with all his might.

The officers were talking, and Dick heard and understood enough of what was said so that he learned what he wished to know.

He learned that the British were figuring on going up the East River in the warships, and after making a landing they would come around and cut off the retreat of the patriots and capture the Continental army.

Down the steps the officers went and on up the street.

Dick waited till they were quite a distance away, and then he slipped out from under the stoop.

Just as he appeared on the sidewalk, he heard an excited voice from behind him cry out:

"A spy! A spy!"

He looked back and saw five soldiers, who were only about fifteen yards distant.

They were just starting toward Dick on the run.

The officers, hearing the shouts of the redcoats, looked back and saw Dick running.

They stopped and watched the chase, but did not join in, although the soldiers cried out that the fugitive was a rebel spy.

"Well, catch him if you can!" replied one of the officers.

There was little doubt that the redcoats would do this if they could.

Dick was a fast runner and gradually drew away from his pursuers.

He kept on the darkest streets, and so managed to keep from meeting other soldiers.

He reached the East River wharf presently and started up it in a northerly direction.

There were no men to be seen, and Dick had a clear path ahead of him.

He drew away from his pursuers quite rapidly now, and when he was almost to the north edge of the city he was challenged by a sentinel:

"Halt! Who comes there?"

"A friend!" cried Dick. "Don't shoot!"

On he dashed.

"Stop, I say!" the sentinel cried.

Dick saw the soldier level his musket.

The Liberty Boy did not stop, however, but kept on running straight toward the sentinel.

"For the last time—halt!"

Dick kept on running. He knew that the sentinel would fire quickly, however, and so he began leaping from side to side and running in a zigzag fashion.

Crack!

The bullet cut through Dick's coat-sleeve and abraded the skin, but the young Continental did not mind a little thing like that.

The next moment, almost, he was upon the sentinel.

Dick had drawn a pistol, and holding it by the muzzle, he dealt the redcoat a blow on the head, felling him.

This left the way open, and the youth dashed onward at top speed.

He was soon out in the country and made his way along at a moderate pace.

He was in the Liberty Boys' quarters at the encampment shortly after midnight, and went to sleep, feeling that he had done a very good night's work.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE BRITISH ON A MOVE.

"Ah, Dick, good morning!"

"Good morning, your excellency."

"Did you learn anything of importance, my boy?"

"Yes, sir."

"Give me the information at once, then, Dick!" eagerly.

It was morning, and Dick had gone to headquarters to report.

He now told the commander-in-chief what he had learned.

General Washington said that the news was indeed important.

He at once called a council of war and laid the matter before the members of the staff.

They talked long and earnestly, and it was decided that the only thing to do was to break camp as soon as the British started to make their move and retreat toward the interior.

Dick was instructed to go down and keep watch on the British.

"Take a number of your Liberty Boys, Dick, and keep watch night and day," the commander-in-chief instructed the youth.

"Very well, your excellency."

Dick hastened to the Liberty Boys' quarters and told them what they were to do.

"We will all go," he said; "and then there will be plenty to keep watch night and day."

They got ready and set out as soon as possible.

They selected a spot over on the East River shore, where they went into camp, and then Dick established a line of youths along the shore a distance of a mile or more, with instructions to keep a sharp lookout for the British warships.

One, two days passed, and then a party consisting of ten British soldiers was captured by the Liberty Boys and were taken up to the encampment.

General Washington ordered the leader of the party, a lieutenant, to be brought before him, and this was done.

The commander-in-chief regarded the officer sternly.

"I am going to ask you a few questions, sir," he said, "will you answer?"

"That depends on whether or not I feel like answering," was the reply.

General Washington asked a number of questions, but the lieutenant refused to answer them, and was sent back to the guardhouse.

On the second night after the capture of the redcoats, Dick and Bob were among those who were on the watch.

They were at the extreme south end of the line of watchers. It was a pretty dark night, but by getting close down to the edge of the water and looking across at the faint skyline it would be possible to see the warships, if they were to come up the river.

Suddenly Bob uttered a low exclamation.

"What is it?" queried Dick.

"I see a ship, Dick."

"Where?" eagerly.

"Look diagonally across the river; don't you see it?"

"Yes."

"And there's another, old fellow!"

"I see it, too."

They watched, and counted six ships that were moving slowly up the river.

"I'll wager each and every one is loaded down with British soldiers, Dick," said Bob.

"Undoubtedly, Bob."

"We must get word to General Washington."

"Just as soon as possible, old fellow."

"Shall I go?"

"Yes, go at once."

Bob set out at once.

He reached the patriot encampment in the shortest time possible and went at once to headquarters.

It was about eleven o'clock, but the commander-in-chief had not yet gone to bed.

He gave Bob a pleasant greeting, and then looked at him eagerly and inquiringly.

"What is the news, my boy?" he asked.

"The British are moving up the river, your excellency!"

"Say you so, Bob?"

"Yes; there are six ships."

General Washington at once summoned the members of his staff and gave orders that the camp be aroused at once, and that the soldiers be instructed to get ready to march.

The officers dispersed to attend to the work that had been assigned to them.

The camp was soon aroused, and the soldiers began making preparations for the march.

Bob then set out on his return to where the Liberty Boys were stationed.

He reached there in due time, and Dick told him that six more ships had gone up the river.

"They are taking a strong force up there, aren't they?" Bob remarked.

"You are right."

"Well, the soldiers are getting ready to break camp and march toward the interior; what shall we do, Dick?"

"We may as well go to the encampment and get ready to accompany them, Bob."

"Yes; we can accomplish nothing here now."

So the Liberty Boys broke camp and marched back to the main encampment on Harlem Heights.

The army was just about ready to start.

The Liberty Boys lost no time in getting ready.

They bridled and saddled their horses and then set out ahead of the infantry, General Washington having ordered Dick to go on ahead and keep a sharp lookout for the British.

The Liberty Boys did their work well and at last succeeded in learning where the ships had come to anchor.

It was at a point called Throg's Neck, a sort of peninsula that extended into the Sound.

"They will stay on the ships till morning, doubtless, and then come ashore," said Dick.

They dismounted and tied their horses and settled down to wait till daylight.

When morning came the British soldiers started to come ashore, but General Washington had sent a goodly force to the assistance of the Liberty Boys, and they fired upon the British and drove them back.

The patriot soldiers held the redcoats there on the peninsula six days, and then, the main army having reached safe quarters at White Plains, the force that had been doing this work set out and rejoined the army.

Thus ends the story of "The Liberty Boys in New York Bay."

Mr. Bushnell, we may add, built a third submarine boat, but he did not get it done in time to use it for the benefit of the patriot cause.

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